



## FGIF INBOX NEWS UPDATES 2024-25

shown on posting date...

**IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR 2024-25** - please note that as per last season all new additions covering club photos, reports, programmes etc are found on the relevant on-site pages. Alternatively, you can also check out the latest club/ground updates as they come in by referring to the yellow panel shown on the *FGIF* Home page...

### JANUARY

**12/01/24: Bob Powell** writes - **FA Trophy 5th round draw**: Gainsborough Trinity v Woking/Radcliffe; Southend United v Sittingbourne; Spennymoor Town v Boston United; Biggleswade Town/Oxford City v Forest Green Rovers; Aldershot v Boreham Wood; Kidderminster Harriers v Sutton United/Tamworth; Worthing v Rochdale /Stockton Town and Altrincham v Eastleigh. Ties to be played Sat 1st February (good planning by the FA as the 5th round of the FA Vase is also on Sat 1st February).

**The New Saints** have complained to FIFA about the Saudi Pro League club Al-Orobah. They transferred striker Brad Young in September 2024 for a fee of a £190k. The Saints chairman Mike Harris said they haven't received any money yet and branded the Saudi club an absolute disgrace.

**Bangor City FC** have been dissolved by Companies House following a compulsory strike off. The club which has been dormant since February 2022 amid unpaid debts and withdrew from the second tier of Welsh football in February 2022.

There was some doubt whether **Newport County** would remain at Rodney Parade, home of Newport Dragons Rugby Club, but Newport County say they have agreed another 10-year deal to remain there.

**Hereford** v Warrington (N/L North) on Sat 11th January was a 1.00 pm ko due to ongoing floodlight issues (this saga began in October). They are due to be at home on Sat 18th January v Southport - at this moment it's shown as a 3.00 pm ko anybody planning a visit it would be prudent to check first.

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> January

**Whitby Town FC** have had their safety certificate revoked but club chairman said it means just the removal of a few seats from the main stand and the club could save up to £8k per month as gates have been falling and they need to reduce costs.

**Maidenhead FC's** game with York City on Sat 11th January is in doubt due to issues with the pitch. The club say the facilities are becoming dilapidated and need a complete overhaul of the ground or a move to a new venue. They were due to move to a new site last year, but this was blocked by the council.

**NCEL** allowed the extreme weather protocol for this weekend's games 10/11 January. Clubs could postpone games without a pitch inspection (it only applied only to NCEL games as FA Vase matches had to follow the FA guidelines.

Big plans for **Tiverton Town** (Southern League Premier South). They hope to have a 3G pitch installed for the start of next season as well as new changing rooms behind the main stand, new led floodlights plus the installation of solar panels.

**Boldon CA** (Northern League Division 2) have a brand new 50-seater stand thanks to the Premier League stadium fund. Their previous stand was badly damaged by Storm Babet in October 2023.

Yesterday's FA Vase game **Atherton LR** v Hallam was subject to a 1.00 pm inspection on Friday. I expect any postponed FA Vase matches from yesterday to be re-arranged for next Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> January.

Another club to suffer from vandals is **Wombwell FC**. Ten junior sides play at the Netherfield Academy. Vandals broke the fencing down and using off-road vehicles churned the pitches up so badly they will be out of commission for some time. They were covered in snow at the time which made matters worse.

**Truro City FC** have got planning permission to install another 500 seats at their new ground.

**Oxhey Jets FC** (CCL) suffered an unusual postponement on Tuesday 7th January for their Herts Charity Shield S/F v Wormley Rovers after fly-tippers dumped six lorry loads of rubbish blocking their car park.

**FA Vase 4th round results:** Sutton United (Birmingham) 2 v Bourne Town 4; AFC Whyteleafe 5 v Dereham Town 0; Portishead Town 0 v AFC Stoneham 4 and Roman Glass St George 1 v Andover New Street 0. All other ties postponed including both of today's (Sunday) games. Ties will be played on Sat 18th January with two games planned for Sunday 19th January. The 5th round draw will take place over the weekend of 1st & 2<sup>nd</sup> February. Prize money - winners £ 2250 and losers £725.

**Every FA Cup Final goal since 1953** - I found this on YouTube recently using the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mXZc0084i9k&t=32s>

**05/01/25: Bob Powell** writes - **Rotherham United FC** is planning to produce a special kit as it celebrates its centenary in 2025. The club was formed on 27th May 1925 as a merger of Rotherham County & Rotherham Town and immediately became part of the EFL. The team are known as the Millers based on the town's history of milling flour and were based at Millmoor until 2008 when they moved to the New York Stadium (capacity 12,021). One family from Maltby will have four generations celebrating the event, ages range from 9 years old to 96 years of age.

**Wellington AFC** (Western League Premier Division) have submitted plans for a new stand. The work must be completed by 25th March 2025 otherwise the club will be unable to maintain its level 5 status.

The draw for the semi-finals of the **Essex Senior Cup** is as follows: Tues 14th Jan - Brightlingsea Regent v Canvey Island (ko 7.45pm (winners play Chelmsford City) and Heybridge Swifts v Hornchurch (ko 7.45pm).

The final will be on Tuesday 18th March @ Colchester United FC (ko time to be confirmed).

A sad time for **Bustlehome FC** (West Midlands) - the club have said that five of its youth teams pitches have been destroyed by vandals on quad bikes leaving ankle deep tracks. All matches have been postponed indefinitely leaving 34 boys & girls' teams with nowhere to play. The club are trying to raise £5k to repair the damage.

As of mid-morning, on Saturday Rochdale v Stockton Town was the only **FA Trophy** game postponed, but the Gateshead v Boston United was switched from Gateshead to Stockton Town (3G pitch) - the joys of ground-hopping

Monday's (06/01) 5th round draw should go-ahead as planned for matches to be played on Saturday 1st February. Prize money winners £6k, losers £1750.

**Whitby Town** (NPL Premier Division) could have its safety certificate revoked after the club decided to reduce the number of covered seats at the ground. North Yorkshire Council is set to cancel Whitby Town's general safety certificate on Tuesday. The stand is currently an officially regulated stand, and the club said it wants to deregulate it by reducing the number of seats to below 500. I don't know if these measures will have any impact on the club's premier division status.

Shock results in trophy games - **Worthing** 5 v Torquay 1 and **Gainsborough Trinity** 1 v York City 0K

Keep an eye out for **Sittingbourne FC** who have reached the 5th round of the FAT for the first time in their history. Can the giant-killers progress beyond the last 16?

## DECEMBER

**29/12/24: Bob Powell** writes - NCEL Premier Division side **Tadcaster Albion** have got a £100k grant from the Premier League Football Fund. This has gone towards new led floodlights, fencing and several relief grants to help the club recover from the effects of storms and flooding. Chairman Andy Charlesworth said without the Premier League Stadium Fund we wouldn't have a club. Our pitch was submerged 6 times last season, we have invested the money in new technology and now have drains that run across the pitch in one corner of the ground. We have a sump basin which means water will drain naturally and we can pump it away.

**Brighton & Hove Albion FC** have announced a £40m upgrade to the Amex Stadium, which will include a new tier for home fans (800) taking the capacity to 32,500. Albion plan to relocate away fans to the south-west corner of the ground in season 2027/28. The club also plan a new fan zone outside the stadium called "The Terrace" and it will have room for 1000 people inside the building and for 2000 outside.

After 7 years in charge of **Bath City** manager Jerry Gill has mutually agreed to leave the club, his replacement will be Darren Way.

**Carabo Cup** semi-finals:

Tuesday 7th January - **Arsenal** v Newcastle 1st leg (ko 20.00pm) on ITV1 & ITVx and Sky Sports and

Wednesday 8th January - **Spurs** v Liverpool 1st leg (ko 20.00pm) on Sky Sports

2nd legs: Wednesday 5th February - **Newcastle** v Arsenal (ko 20.00pm) on Sky Sports and Thursday 6th February - **Liverpool** v Spurs (ko 20.00pm) on Sky Sports & ITV1 & ITVx.

**Dagenham & Redbridge** have sacked manager Ben Strevens after the 4-2 defeat at home to Braintree on Boxing Day. He was previously manager at Eastleigh.

Boxing Day's National League South game between **Hemel Hempstead Town** v St Albans City was abandoned due to a power cut affecting the whole area. No details yet when the game will be replayed.

Several **Tamworth** supporters have said they will watch the Spurs cup tie on TV after the club pushed up the prices for the cup tie.

Normal prices - main stand £21 and terrace £18..

now for Spurs game - main stand adults £42 and terrace £38; over 66's - stand £37 and terrace £33; Under 17's - stand £34 and terrace £30; Under 10's - stand £29 and terrace £25.

**Weymouth FC** have announced they will no longer issue hard copies of their matchday programme. From January 4th they will be issuing digital programmes instead. They will remain on the website indefinitely with free and easy downloads.

**22/12/24: Bob Powell** writes - Junction 6, the company that own Worcester Warriors Rugby Club, have big plans for the stadium including redeveloping the north stand which will increase capacity to 12,750 and will include a "watch tower" viewing platform and a new fan zone area. They hope to build a 120-room hotel close to the stadium. **Worcester City** have signed a 5-year deal to play there until 2030. City's final league match at Claines Lane will be on Saturday 26th April 2025. I think in my early piece I inadvertently said Worcester Warriors FC would be homeless, it should have said Worcester Raiders FC (Hellenic League Premier Division).

**Woking FC** have sacked manager Michael Doyle (ex-Celtic, Coventry City & Sheffield United) after poor results.

Essex Senior League side **FC Clacton** face an uncertain future following a long running dispute with Tendering District Council over the terms of the lease (the club was established in 1892). Despite many offers to compromise with the council they have now issued an order requiring possession by May 1st 2025. It seems they have other plans for the site but will not reveal what they are. The club are seeking legal advice to fight this.

**Witton Albion** (NPL West) are planning a share issue in the hope that supporters will buy them so they can use the money for ground improvements.

**Luton Town** submitted a final planning application regarding their new stadium. Permission has been granted to use the stadium as a music venue and build a hotel close by.

**Calverton MW FC** (Notts Senior League) can't believe their luck - earlier in the season they were awarded £100k to install a new 3G pitch and now they have been chosen under the Game Changer Scheme (£3m investment programme to improve clubhouse facilities) across the UK by Howdens and England football. They are one of 450 clubs to benefit from this scheme and have had a brand-new kitchen fitted. It is understood the club was chosen as they run several boys' and girls' teams.

**Farsley Celtic's** season is turning into a nightmare. The club say that Storm Darragh left the ground in a severely waterlogged state. Engineers have assessed the surface and said additional works are needed to what was already planned. No date has been given as to when they can start laying the 4G pitch. A return looks a long way off. On the field things are no better - last night's FA Trophy game ended Gateshead 8 v Farsley Celtic 1.

The new prospective owner of **Maldon & Tiptree** (and its 20-acre stadium site) said if his offer is successful, he plans to rebuild the stadium & clubhouse hoping to bring the community together.

**Hereford FC** are still having problems with their new floodlights. The company Musco that's doing the work and have new designs for the foundations and installations of the floodlights said this will prove much more expensive than expected. The club has spoken to the Football Foundation for help. It has also failed in its bid to change the name from Hereford fc back to its old name of Hereford United.

**Woking FC** have appointed Neil Ardley as their new manager (ex AFC Wimbledon manager amongst others).

**Woodbridge Town FC** (Eastern Counties League Premier Division) who have been based at their Nottcutts Park ground since 1990 have signed a 25-year lease. Chairman Paul Leech said it's a major milestone for the future of the club.

Lydney Town (Hellenic League Premier Division) hope to play their first home game three weeks after storm Bert left the ground under 4 feet of water (Sat 21st Nov v Malmesbury Victoria) while the ground has been drained, the clubhouse which is used by the local food bank remains out of action, The repair work is going to cost a lot of money.

**Chester-le-Street United** (Northern League Div 2) are changing their name from the end of this season and in future will be known as Park View AFC.

**Barton Town** (NCEL Premier Division) are devastated to learn of the death of their goalkeeper James Hitchcock. He died from his injuries on Wednesday 18/12/24 following an incident at York railway station. He was returning home after a night out. A 22-year-old man from Middlesborough has been charged with his murder. As a mark of respect, the club have postponed all their games on sat 21/12 (the 1st team were due to play away at Silsden).

The Velocity Cup 1/4 final draw is as follows: **Hashtag United** v Chatham Town; **Hastings United** v Binfield; **Leatherhead** v Hendon (07/01) and **Billericay** v Sheppey United. Ties are to be played by 31st January 2025. The final will be played at Aveley FC (date to be confirmed).

Nb - Aveley FC is also the home of Hashtag United FC so there's an incentive for them to reach the final.

Welsh Cup 1/4 final draw: **Denbigh Town** v Llanelli Town; **Caerau Ely** v Connah Quays Nomads; **The New Saints** v Airbus UK Broughton and **Cambrian United** v Carmarthen Town. Ties to be played the weekend of 14/15 February 2025.



Southend Council have signed off a deal for 805 homes to be built at Fossetts Farm which will release £20m for **Southend United** to regenerate their Roots Hall ground.

**Kettering** pitch and track (address - Thurston Drive Kettering) which 5 years ago was condemned as being unsafe is to get a £1m in funding from various sources. Plans are for a new 3G pitch, improved lighting, the pavilion will be renovated with new changing rooms, a new athletics club room and a cafe. I will watch with interest if any football teams move in there.

**15/12/24: Bob Powell** writes - **Brentford**'s old ground is to have 149 homes built on it. Griffin Park Stadium was the club's home for 119 years and was demolished last year. The new ground is the GTech Community Stadium address is Lionel Road South not far from Kew Bridge railway station.

Problems for two Hertfordshire based teams: **Sawbridgeworth Town** (Essex Senior League) have appealed for help after suffering storm damage - the turnstiles have been destroyed, the stand and supporting wall have also been badly damaged. They have received almost £3k in donations from the community to help with repairs to the ground.

**Kings Langley** (S/L Div 1 Central) say it has suffered at least £10k worth of damage to its fencing.

Things are on the move at last for National League North side **Leamington FC**. Warwickshire District Council has bought the land for the site of Leamington's new ground. The stadium will be at Europa Way/Gallows Hill adjoining the Warwick Technology Park. The ground will have a 5000 capacity, a 3G pitch, conference facilities, a gym, bar and cafe.

**Farsley Celtic** say captain Lewis Turner is conscious and talking after suffering a cardiac arrest during last night's trophy match when the 32-year-old (former Leeds Academy player) collapsed. He was rushed to hospital after being resuscitated. So far, no news from the FA if and when the game will be replayed.

**Crewe FC** of the Cheshire League Premier Division had hoped to move from the Cumberland Arena (athletics track with 3G pitch) to the King George V PF. They had secured £1.3 m from the Football Foundation for new pitch, new clubhouse and changing rooms but are worried that East Cheshire Council are dragging their feet in giving the scheme the go-ahead. They have said they will resolve the matter soon. The club are worried that they may lose the funding.

**Thorne Colliery** (NCEL 1) have been playing matches away after their clubhouse was damaged by fire and then condemned by the council. They have had some buildings installed at the ground but need help in trying to raise £30k to convert some of these buildings into changing rooms. If things go to plan, they hope to play Armthorpe at home on December 28th.

Possible good times ahead for **Maldon & Tiptree FC** (I/L Div 1 North) - multi-millionaire Barrie Drewitt Barlow has made an offer to buy the club and said he wants them to achieve greater things.

Bognor Regis Town FC have submitted a planning application with Arun Council for a new state of the art 3G pitch and new led floodlights. If it is granted, they hope to have everything in place for the start of the 2025/26 season.

Southampton City Council and **Southampton FC** say they plan the redevelopment of St. Mary's waterfront. The council plan to turn the area into a vibrant setting with new homes and businesses and increase the capacity of Southampton FC. The present capacity is 32,000 but the council haven't said what the new capacity will be.

**Worcester City FC** have announced from season 25/26 they will be playing at Sixways stadium, the home of Worcester Warriors Rugby Club. They have re-applied to stage rugby after dropping out of the rugby set-up. The ground has an 11,000 capacity with a 3G pitch. The Worcester City chairman has said they still want their own ground, but their move to the Sports Park at Fernhill Heath with the council stalling over funding for this project. It will also cause problems for Worcester Warriors FC who had been playing at Sixways leaving them homeless. I expect them to move into Claines Lane (they left this ground in 2020) where Worcester City play, having made several ground improvements.

**FA Trophy** - Tuesday 17th December - **Gateshead v Farsley Celtic** (ko 19.45pm). The full 90 minutes will be played (not from the time of the abandonment). Last week's tickets are still valid, and any newcomers will have to pay full admission.

Northern League Division 1 side **Guisborough Town** (near Middlesbrough) has said it's only surviving due to the donations, support and passion of volunteers. The club has lost more than £10k in stolen items and repair bills after two recent break ins.

#### **Bedfordshire FA Quarter-Final Cup Draws Season 2024-25:**

*Senior Trophy* - **Stotfold Reserves** v Ampthill Town; **Totternhoe Reserves** v AFC Oakley; **Caldecote** v Flitwick Town and **Queens Park Crescents** v Marston Shelton Rovers.

*Intermediate Cup* - **Clifton** v Harlington Juniors; **Ickwell & Old Warden** v Harlington Juniors Reserves; **Kempston United** v Stopsley United and **Kempston Rovers Reserves** v Lu Donz

**08/12/24: Bob Powell** writes - an apology! I was given the wrong information regarding the **Welsh League Cup Final**...the game between Aberystwyth Town v The New Saints will be played on **Friday 28th February 2025 at Latham Park home of Newtown AFC** (ko 7.45pm).



**The Welsh Cup Final** on Sunday 4th May 2025 will be played at **Newport County FC** - no time to be advised. Finalists not yet known.

**Torquay** fans must be happy that Monday's **Devon Bowl** was played behind closed doors, with both sides fielding very youthful teams. Exeter demolished Torquay 11-0 with Theo Cutler scoring 6 times. Exeter will be away to Barnstaple in the 1/4 finals.

A new environmentally friendly timber football stadium for **Forest Green Rovers** has got planning permission. This will include an all-wooden 5000-seater stadium with 1700 car parking spaces and a business park near junction 13 of the M5 in Gloucestershire. The new stadium is very modern in design giving a distinct appearance with its undulating roofscape. The present ground will be demolished and be replaced by 95 homes. No timescale has been quoted for this to happen.

Welsh rugby club **Llandovery** have just received funding to upgrade their ground to a multi-sports complex with a new 3g pitch. LED floodlights and improved spectator viewing (from the website it looks an impressive set up). The club are based at Llandovery Church Bank North Carmarthenshire, i don't know of any senior football club playing there yet, but it would be any ideal venue in wet weather.

**Redcar Athletic FC** top of the Northern League Division 1, on course for promotion, have just signed a deal with local firm B & D Interiors which will include naming rights of the stadium. The club are hoping this may lead to ground improvements. Weather permitting the club are at home to North Shields in the 3rd round of the FA Vase on Saturday 07/12. They issue a decent programme "*By the Sea*" for £2.00.

Northern League North side **Rushall Olympic** have sacked manager Adam Stevens, with ex WBA midfielder Richard Sneekes put in interim charge. The club have struggled in the league but have done well in the cups reaching the 1st round of the FA Cup losing 0-2 to Accrington Stanley before a record crowd and are still in the FA Trophy away to Gainsborough Trinity on Sat 07/12.

Good news for **Newbury FC**. The council have adjusted the layout of the dressing rooms and they have passed an inspection by the FA and so can now play all their games at home. They are due to host Reading City U23 on 07/12, weather permitting.

**Bilston Town** will become the first fans' owned club in the West Midlands. The club will become a Community Benefit Society and will launch the sale of memberships at tomorrow's home Midlands League division 1 game vs Paget Rangers.

The following FA Cup 3rd round matches will be shown live on TV:

Friday 10th January - **Aston Villa** v West Ham United (ko 8pm) on ITV1 & ITVx;  
Saturday 11th January - **Liverpool** v Accrington Stanley (ko 12.15pm) on ITV1 & ITVx;  
Saturday 11th January - **Manchester City** v Salford City (ko 5.45pm) on BBC1 & iPlayer;  
Sunday 12th January - **Tamworth** v Spurs (ko 12.30pm) on ITV1 & ITVx;  
Sunday 12th January - **Arsenal** v Manchester United (ko 3pm) on BBC1 & iPlayer  
and Monday 13th January - **Millwall** v Dagenham & Redbridge (ko 7.30 pm) on ITV4 & ITVx.

I have seen pictures via the Liverpool Echo showing **Everton's** new ground badly flooded. The club explained the new drainage system is not fully installed yet and there will be no problem once the work is completed.

Highstead Park will be the new home of **Sittingbourne FC**. The plans are to create a new garden village at Swale. The first step is to build a new junction 5a of the M2. The new ground will back onto the motorway and will only be about 1/4 mile from the existing ground. Planning permission has not been granted yet but as they include many new houses, schools and shops it is understood the council are in favour of it going ahead.

**FA Cup 3rd round**. Two more games have been moved to Thursday 9th January: **Sheffield United** v Cardiff City (ko 7pm) live on BBC Wales & BBC iPlayer and **Everton** v Peterborough United (ko 7.45 pm) live on BBC iPlayer & the BBC Sport web-site (Peterborough are outraged that the game has been moved to Thursday saying it's totally unfair on their fans).

**The FA Vase 4th round** draw will be released on the FA's website at midday) on Monday 9th December. I understand that most of last Saturday's postponed games will now be played on Saturday 14th December. Prize money - 4th round winners £1875 with losers receiving £600. The ties are to be played on Sat 11th January 2025.

**The FA Trophy 4th round** draw can be heard on Monday 9th December live on *talksport 2* at 3.15 pm. Prize money - winners £5250 and losers £1500. The 4th round ties are to be played on Sat 4th January 2025.

**01/12/24: Bob Powell** writes - work has now finished at **Mangotsfield United's** new ground (Hellenic Premier Division). The £1.2m grant included a new 3g pitch, new LED floodlights, upgrading the clubhouse, building a new covered stand and installing new fencing. The new pitch was in use on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> November for Mangotsfield United 2 v Slimbridge 0.

**West Allotment Celtic FC** are to resume fixtures in the Northern League. The club are at home on Sat. 14th December v Easington Colliery (ko 12.00pm). Hoppers

may be interested in doing a possible double header, weather permitting. The club are doing a collectors' edition printed programme to mark the first home game under their new model. The club have sorted out their problems out but there are no details on how this has been achieved.

I have just seen TV pictures of **Lydney Town's** ground (Hellenic Premier League) under water It's heartbreaking for the club who are due to be at home to Thornbury Town on Saturday 30/11 which must be in doubt as more rain is forecast through the week.

The draw was made for the quarter-finals of the **Les Phillips Cup** (Western League) last night (Tues 26/11):

1 - **Barnstable** v Brixham; 2 - **Cheddar** v Devizes or Street; 3 - **Hengrove or Portishead** v Brislington or Clevedon and 4 - **Shepton or Oldlands** v Radstock or Wells. Matches will be played on Saturday 18th January 2025. Semi-Finals - 4v1 and 3v2 - Saturday 8th March and Final will be played on Sunday 11th May at Tiverton Town FC.

Great news for **Chard Town FC** (Somerset County League). The council plan to relocate them after giving planning permission for 300 new homes to be built at and around the present ground. The new ground will be at Mount Hindrance North Chard and will have two community pitches next to the new ground. Chard's old ground was famous for its sloping pitch which the FA considered unsuitable for a higher level of football and as a result the club resigned from the Western League at the end of season 2017/18.

**West Allotment Celtic FC** say the future is looking much brighter after several local businesses rallied round to help the club who have formed a new committee and are keen to get started.

**Harborough Town's** FA Cup trip to Reading has the town buzzing and the club have sold almost 3000 tickets for the game.

BBC Midlands have tried to contact the owner of **Walsall Wood FC** about its future plans. So far, they failed to respond, Local clubs Chasetown and Rushall Olympic will honour season's ticket for Walsall Wood that were bought before the start of the season.

**Weymouth** have sacked manager Mark Molesey (former Bournemouth midfielder) with immediate effect due to poor results. Goalkeeping coach Jason Matthews will take interim charge.

Anybody wanting to go to the **Devon Bowl** match between **Torquay United** v Exeter City on Monday 2nd December should note that due to problems with the pitch at Plainmoor this match will now be played at Exeter's Cliff Hill training ground (ko 7.30 pm) but will be played behind closed doors. Anybody who bought tickets in advance will get a full refund.

As expected **Lydney Town** v Thornbury on Saturday 30th November was postponed due to waterlogged pitch.

Anybody hoping to attend Saturday's FA Trophy game at **Brentwood** v Southend United (on 7/12) without a ticket...forget it as the match was limited to 1500 capacity. Brentwood sold their allocation in under 2 hours. Southend got just 225 tickets which were apparently snapped up in under 5 minutes.

There is some confusion about National League fixtures for Saturday 7th December at **Needham Market** v Hereford (NL North) and **Farnborough** v Hornchurch (NL South). Both home clubs are showing the fixtures as 3.00pm & 7.45 pm kick-offs. The BBC's website shows the games with a 7.45 pm ko and the National League as 3pm.

**Needham Market** received planning permission for a new 280-seater stand (from drawings I have seen looks very impressive with several notable features) back in August but so far, they are trying to raise the funds for it.

The Welsh League Cup Final will be played at **Newport County FC on Sunday 4th May 2025** between Aberystwth Town v The New Saints (ko time to be confirmed).

**07/12/24: Jon T Green** writes - *A bit of departure from the norm for me this weekend as I decided to make my hop a Friday night affair (at **Barkingside FC**) in the metroland that is Ilford. I knew very little about Cricklefield Stadium other than it having athletics track but what a superb venue it turned out to be - masses of wonderful terracing (I still miss the days of watching Football League action from beneath some cavernous covered terrace, sigh!!!) so this was a real treat if one slightly curtailed by the sweeping rain which sent me sprinting for the covered stand.*

**01/12/24: John Walker** writes - On 4th January 2025 I am celebrating 60 years with **St Neots Town Football Club**. It all began on 4<sup>th</sup> January 1965 when I attended my first match at Shortsands. On that day, the then Manager John Gregory (Senior) invited me to do an instant match report for the Kettering Evening Telegraph and since then I have reported on around 3,000 St Neots matches home and away.

**01/12/24: Mark Kettlety** who produces many **programmes** for many non-league clubs, often under the guise of MK Productions, has been in touch. He also does one off programmes for clubs, such as for East Thurrock Community yesterday for whom he printed off a limited number of programmes for them at their request. Mark asks me, *'Have you a list of potential customers for me as I can supply printed programmes from those on line digital which greatly helps collectors?'* If this interests you then please contact Mark by email to [sundayonly1@aol.com](mailto:sundayonly1@aol.com)

**01/12/24: John Brailsford (Secretary of The Summer League)** writes - Hi everyone - The Summer Football League Council are working towards recruiting more teams for next season and they propose to circulate a poster to pubs, clubs and other likely venues over a wide area including Alton, Brailsford, Doveridge, Etwall, Hatton, Hilton, Kirk Langley, Littleover, Mackworth, Marchington, Mickelover, Parwich, Sudbury, Tutbury and Uttoxeter, for a start. Many of these places have a lot of new houses, so it's worth a try and hopefully also some former players are missing the SFL and want to stage a come-back. Remember that the Summer Football League is now open to all players aged 16 and over without any restrictions, including registration with the FA, or any other league. Constructive suggestion about how to advance the Summer Football League are most welcome as we don't want it to fade away for lack of interest. Once it's gone, it's likely to have gone for ever.

**HERTS SENIOR CUP UPDATE** - the updated quarter final draw is:  
**St Albans City** v Potters Bar Town or Watford; **Wormley Rovers** v Boreham Wood;  
**Hitchin Town or Hemel Hempstead Town** v Leverstock Green or Stevenage and  
**Cheshunt or Baldock Town** v Ware.

## NOVEMBER

**25/11/24: Gary Spooner** writes - *Just the one game on our Scottish trip which as always was excellent despite the cold! The game we saw was at **Creetown**. Lovely setting and a tremendously friendly welcome as you can see from the smiling faces in the pics. Requested to put on Twitter if you can sort. Reasonable game with an expected home win for Creetown against bottom of the table Wigtown & Bladnoch though not as easy as I (and possibly the home team) thought it would be! Second Saturday saw horrendous weather as storm Bert hit. Much as I wanted to getting to a game was not going to happen.*

**24/11/24: Jon T Green** writes - *Well I suppose that after weeks of beautifully benign weather the elements would finally catch up with us. After heading over to Leicestershire for a couple of prospective new "ticks" the news soon started to filter through of one postponement after another. Luckily, I had a 4G game up my*

sleeve (can you have a backup game secreted anywhere else???) and **Rugby Borough** came to the rescue.

**24/11/24: Bob Powell** writes - the draw for the FA Trophy was made on Monday 18/11:

Northern section - **Basford** v Halifax Town; **Hartlepool Utd** v Tamworth; **AFC Fylde** v Kidderminster H; **Gateshead** v Farsley Celtic; **Stockton Town** v Oldham Ath; **Southport** v Peterborough Sports; **Solihull Moors** v Radcliffe; **Boston United** v Alvechurch; **Altrincham** v Macclesfield T; **Leamington** v Rochdale; **York City** v Darlington; **Gainsborough Town** v Rushall Olympic; **Chorley** v Warrington Rylands and **Alfreton Town** v Spennymoor Town.

Southern section - **Chertsey** v Dagenham & Redbridge; **Braintree** v Forest Green Rovers; **Barnet** v Aveley; **Sutton United** v Ebbsfleet; **Boreham Wood** v Eastbourne Borough; **Aldershot** v Wealdstone; **Oxford City** v Hadley; **Woking** v Havant & Waterlooville; **Sittingbourne** v Enfield Town; **Torquay United** v Horsham; **Yeovil** v Weymouth; **Chesham United** v Salisbury; **Biggleswade Town** v AFC Totton; **Hanwell Town** v Eastleigh; **Brentwood** v Southend; **Slough Town** v Maidenhead; **Worthing** v Gosport Borough and **Hampton & R** v Hashtag United.

Ties are to be played on Saturday 7th December - prize money: winners £4500 and losers £1250.

**Redditch United** have re-appointed Matt Clarke as manager after drugs charges against him were dropped. Previous manager Tim Flowers resigned on Thursday 14/11 to become the new manager at Alvechurch.

**Gateshead FC** hope to have an agreement signed off by the local council today (Tuesday 19/11) that would grant them an English Football League licence. They were barred from last season's play-offs because they didn't have a 10-year security of tenure at the International Stadium. Negotiations have taken place where Gateshead have reached an agreeable form of wording with the EFL. A full council meeting is expected to approve the 10-year licence today.

**Dumbarton** of Scottish Division 1 have gone into administration. Following their 15-point penalty they now drop to the bottom of the league. A 5-point penalty will also apply next season.

The draw for the 4th round of the **Welsh Cup** is as follows: **Afan Lido** v Cambrian United; **The New Saints** v Colwyn Bay; **Haverfordwest County** v Llanelli Town; **Carmarthen Town** v Holyhead Hotspur; **Denbigh Town** v Llanuwchllyn; **Caerau Ely** v Bala Town; **Airbus UK Broughton** v Caersws and **Connahs Quay Nomads** v Mold Alexandra. Ties will be played 13th/14th December.



**Newbury FC** return to Faraday Road has hit problems. The Thames Valley Premier League have refused to approve the facilities declaring the dressing rooms are too small and not up to league standards so the club is unable to play league matches at the ground.

**Dumbarton FC** have started a fundraiser to try and save the club. £50k is their target. Also, police have started a probe into a suspected fraud at the club.

**Crayford greyhound stadium** is to close at the end of December. It's rumoured that football could be played there (it would be ideal for travellers as it's next to Crayford railway station). It's known that **Welling United** are looking to move but the most obvious outcome is that houses will be built there.

**Sherwood Colliery FC** (NPL East division) were due to return home yesterday (23/11) weather permitting v Brighouse Town as their brand new 3g pitch is ready for use. The club had been playing at Rainworth MW whilst the pitch was being laid.

**Maidstone United FC** faced a 240-mile round trip to Salisbury for their National League South fixture. The match referee called the game off at 1.45 pm saying he was unhappy with the bounce of the ball in one corner of the pitch leaving the Maidstone manager fuming saying we have played in far worst conditions.

The FA Cup 2nd round - five matches will be played on Sunday 1st December: **Kettering Town** v Doncaster Rovers (ko 12.00pm) shown on BBC2; **Blackpool** v Birmingham City (ko 1pm); **Burton Albion** v Tamworth (ko 2pm); **Reading** v Harborough Town (ko 2pm) and **Solihull Moors** v Bromley (ko 3.15 pm) on ITV1 and ITVx.

**Cambridge City** - It is now confirmed that Cambridge City's first adult game at their **new ground** in Sawston, against Tilbury, will now take place on **Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> November** (3pm). The game has been made all ticket so that City can make sure that they have enough staff on duty to safely handle what is expected to be a bumper crowd. Tickets are on sale now: adults £10 plus a 25p booking fee; concessions - £5 plus 13p booking fee. Tickets can be bought online from the City website: <https://www.cambridgecityfc.com/event-details/cambridge-city-vs-tilbury-fc> The address of the new ground is: FWD-IP Community Stadium, West Way, Sawston, Cambridge, CB22 3FG.

**18/11/24: Jonathan Holloway** writes - *Last Saturday I decided to travel to see **Bilston Town U-21's** play their top of the table clash v Sutton Utd U-21's. This was because I didn't like the look of the afternoon forecast for rain coming over to the*

*region. In the end I did go to Cadbury Athletic too, managing to make it there after 20 minutes played, although they lost 1-3. This was my 3rd visit to Queen Street.*

**17/11/24: Bob Powell** writes - Sat 9th November was a poignant day for **Newbury FC**. After a 6-year absence they returned to Faraday Road. The club was evicted in 2018 from its council owned ground which was later destroyed by an arson attack in 2021. However, the Liberal Democrats, who have controlled the council since 2023, have helped the club to return home. They now play in the Thames Valley Premier League, Sadly, there was no fairy tale homecoming when they played Abingdon Abbots (formerly Abingdon Town) in the Oxford Senior League in a cup match but lost 0-3.

A **Suffolk** side is guaranteed to feature in the last 32 of the FA Vase as the last remaining sides were drawn to face each other. **Walsham-le-Willows v Brantham Athletic** will face each other on Sat 7th December (ko 3.00 pm).

The FAW has asked **Merthyr Town FC** to quit the Southern League Premier Division South and play in the expanded Cymru Premier League in 2026. Back in the early 1990's Merthyr Tydfil was among a group of clubs that refused to join the new League of Wales. At that time Merthyr were in the Conference (now National League) and were allowed to remain in the English set up after a successful appeal. Merthyr Tydfil was liquidated in 2010 and re-established as Merthyr Town the club's original name. They said that they are aware of the FAW's request but as a community run club, we won't be making any decision until we have held a full board meeting.

It's the end of an era at **Wimborne Town FC** - after spending two decades at the club their all-time record appearance holder has hung up his boots. Scott "Arnie" Arnold played his 618th and final match at home to Weymouth on Tuesday 12/11 in the 1/4 final of the Dorset Senior Cup (result - Wimborne Town 0 v Weymouth 3). The centre back has been described as a legend for the club.

**Hailsham Town FC** (Southern Combination League) suffered an arson attack on Tuesday night (12/11) when a hedge between the ground and adjoining recreation ground was set ablaze. The club's youth team coaches rescued several children and nobody was injured. It's understood that 20% of the stand was damaged and it's not known if this will have any impact on the upcoming fixtures.

Problems ahead for National League North side **Farsley Celtic** who are playing their home games 70 miles away at Buxton (Derbyshire). The club dug their pitch up with a view to installing a new 4g pitch but civil engineers have found problems

and work hasn't started yet. The club also face allegations of late payment of wages to players and staff. The supporters have passed a vote of no confidence in chairman Paul Barthorpe and in a statement the club said they are working thorough what is called a major but short-term issue.

National League north side **Buxton FC** have been given planning permission to re-build and upgrade their stand to 1000 capacity. Chairman David Hopkins said the stand is 50 years old and is looking tired so it's time to replace it.

**Ipswich Town** have submitted plans to extend their training centre. Redevelopment of the Playford Road site would include a state-of-the-art first team building including a hydrotherapy centre, modernised gym and rehabilitation areas for the players. Work is due to start in 2025 and scheduled to be completed ahead of the 2026/7 season.

Northern League Division 1 side **West Allotment Celtic** have asked the Northern League for a 2-week suspension of fixtures so the club can explore options to save the very existence of the club.

Sat 16/11 **FA Trophy 2nd round** a couple of surprising results - Scunthorpe United 1 v Warrington Rylands 2 and Horsham 2 v Maidstone United 1 and one very entertaining game Coleshill Town 4 v Biggleswade Town 5.

Over £3k has been raised by football fans for Josh Owers (22) the **Taunton Town** midfielder who has undergone surgery on his jaw after being injured on Saturday 9th November. He suffered a bleed on the brain and a double fracture of the jaw. His father Gary Owers, former Bristol City player said we're overwhelmed with the support he's been shown. Best wishes to him on a speedy recovery.

#### **FA YOUTH CUP 3<sup>rd</sup> Round draw:**

- 01 **Watford** v Oxford United
- 02 **Millwall** v Hull City
- 03 **Leyton Orient or Whitehawk** v AFC Fylde or Northampton Town
- 04 **Hertford Town or Bristol Rovers** v Arsenal
- 05 **AFC Bournemouth** v Ipswich Town
- 06 **Harrogate Town or Birmingham City** v West Bromwich Albion
- 07 **Queens Park Rangers** v Gillingham or Swindon Town
- 08 **Derby County** v Sunderland
- 09 **Burton Albion or Notts County** v Fulham
- 10 **Leicester City** v Chelsea
- 11 **Stoke City** v Bromley or Rising Ballers Kensington
- 12 **Cardiff City** v Chesterfield or Shrewsbury Town

- 13 **Bristol City** v Sheffield Wednesday
- 14 **Portsmouth** v Leeds United
- 15 **Eastleigh or AFC Wimbledon** v Wolverhampton Wanderers
- 16 **Tottenham Hotspur** v Middlesbrough
- 17 **Norwich City** v Brentford
- 18 **Fleetwood Town or Tamworth** v Burnley
- 19 **Aston Villa** v Accrington Stanley or Blyth Spartans
- 20 **Sheffield United** v Blackburn Rovers
- 21 **Merstham or Forest Green Rovers** v Burgess Hill Town or Colchester United
- 22 **Luton Town** v Crewe Alexandra or Blackpool
- 23 **Grimsby Town or Salford City** v West Ham United
- 24 **Everton** v Nottingham Forest
- 25 **Preston North End** v Liverpool
- 26 **Manchester United** v Coventry City
- 27 **Swansea City** v Southampton
- 28 **Stevenage or Cheltenham Town** v Exeter City or AFC Dunstable
- 29 **Manchester City** v Crystal Palace
- 30 **Bolton Wanderers or Lincoln City** v Wrexham
- 31 **Carlisle United** v Plymouth Argyle and
- 32 **Newcastle United** v Brighton & Hove Albion

**11/11/24: Steve Hardy** writes - *Report and a few photos from Saturday's trip to BNJS FC in sunny Oldbury. Another super afternoon out though...*

**10/11/24: Bob Powell** writes - the **FA Cup 2nd round** will take place over the weekend of Saturday 30th November. Winners will receive £75k and losers £20k.

Administrators for **Inverness Caledonian Thistle** say they have had 20 offers of people interested in buying the club.

**Manchester United** have surveyed 50,000 fans about a new ground. Results - 52% in favour of a new ground and 31% want Old Trafford to be redeveloped. The owners and council are keen for a 100,000 all-seater stadium hoping to replace Wembley as the centre of English football. If a new stadium does go ahead only Barcelona will have a bigger capacity (105,000) in Europe.

**Widnes FC** - NPL West Division have submitted a planning application with Halton Council. They want to move into the King George 5th playing fields just off Dundalk Road which is not far south of the DCBL Stadium which they share with Widnes Vikings Rugby League side. The proposals include a redesigned clubhouse with a constructed viewing balcony, floodlights, a 150-seater stand plus another 150 standing only stand, ticket office, a turnstile, fencing and parking for 57 vehicles.

The following matches in the **FA Cup 2nd round** will be **shown on TV**:

Friday 29th Nov - **Harrogate Town** v Gainsborough Trinity (ko 7.45pm) on BBC2;  
Saturday 30th Nov - **Wealdstone** v Wycombe Wands (ko 11.30am) on ITV1 & ITVx;  
**AFC Wimbledon** v Dagenham & Red (ko 7.15pm on ITVx) and Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December -  
**Kettering Town** v Doncaster Rovers (ko 12.00 midday) on BBC2 and **Solihull Moors**  
v Bromley (ko 3.15 pm) on ITV1 & ITVx. Note - **Gainsborough Trinity** so far have  
earned £65,625 in prize money and clubs will get £60k for live TV and prize money  
is £75 k winners and £20k losers so a nice pay day for the non-league clubs.

Isthmian League side **Folkestone Invicta** are offering half price admission for the  
following two matches: Sat 28<sup>th</sup> December v Wingate & Finchley (ko 3.00pm) and  
Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> January v Hastings United (ko 3.00pm).

Essex Senior League side **FC Clacton** hopes of installing a 3g pitch outside their  
ground for training purposes has been rejected by Tendring District Council.

**Bury FC** (NWCL) installed a new 3g pitch during October and the club hope to have  
in LED floodlights in the near future.

**Wythenshawe Town** 1 v Widnes 2 went ahead yesterday (09/11) so the club and  
the league must have settled their differences.

There was a sensational game in the Northern League Division 2 yesterday (09/11)  
as **Sunderland West End** (v Yarm & Eaglescliffe). After 70 minutes West End led 4-1  
before four goals were scored in 7 minutes of added time with the game finishing  
Sunderland West End 5 Yarm & Eaglescliffe 6 in front of 105 spectators.

**Caister FC** (Anglian Comb) want to install a 13.8-foot fence behind one goal to  
stop balls going into nearby gardens. Great Yarmouth Council have approved the  
plans but local residents are unhappy saying it was more suited to a security  
setting! Surely netting would have kept everybody happy?

The draw for the **3rd round of the FA Vase** will be released at 1.00 pm on Monday  
11/11. Matches will be played on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December. Winners get £1125 with  
losers receiving £350.

**10/11/24: Gary Spooner** writes - *Was the magic of the Vase yesterday but mostly  
off the pitch as the game at Bedfont was pretty dire with Jersey Bulls scoring two  
late goals to avoid a penalty shoot-out. Far more entertaining than the game were  
the planes landing next door at Heathrow which flew over the ground every  
minute! Very friendly club and an excellent ground and set up at Bedfont Sports.  
Trains behaved and I was very happy with my day out.*

**10/11/24: Jon T Green** writes - *Re my trip to **Liversedge FC**. What can I say, a superb hop to a beautiful part of Yorkshire (isn't it all?). A wonderfully welcoming and well-run club and a super competitive match. This is truly what our hobby is all about.*

**10/11/24: John Walker** writes - HINCHINGBROOKE CUP - FACTS AND FIGURES: **EYNESBURY ROVERS'** 9-0 victory over Parsons Drove on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2024 led to me to scouring the competition records for the high scoring feats in the past 65 years.

**WOOTTON BLUE CROSS** still hold the absolute record in 1970/71 when they thrashed visiting Marston Shelton 12-2.

Three clubs have reached double figures - **SOHAM TOWN RANGERS** won 10-0 at Hemingford in 1963/64, **POTTON UNITED** beat Ramsey Town at home 10-0 in 1992/93 and **BOURNE TOWN** won 10-0 at Somersham Town in 2006/07.

Three further clubs have scored nine times without reply. **WOOTTON BLUE CROSS** (the only side to feature twice as winners in these records until this week) beat Huntingdon United 9-0 at home in 1968/69, **EYNESBURY ROVERS** beat neighbours Potton United 9-0 at Hall Road in 2012/13 and in the previous most recent feat last season **DEEPING RANGERS** won 9-0 at Huntingdon Town.

**EYNESBURY ROVERS (at Hall Road)** therefore become the first side to feature as winners in these unusual scoring records on two occasions (although Potton feature twice - one as the defeated side!).

**03/11/24: Gary Spooner** writes - *'No car trouble yesterday and a cracking trip to Wales and **Mynydd Isa**. The Welsh Amateur Trophy is up there with the Vase for me and yesterday's game was a classic north v south affair with the visitors and their travelling fans having had a five-hour journey from Swansea. Free admission though the bar was doing a roaring trade especially from the visiting fans! Excellent game too. Honours were even at half time. West End had taken the lead only for Mynydd Isa to equalise straight from the restart! Highly competitive game with the tackles flying in on a very soft pitch and chances at both ends before West End took the lead to the delight of their travelling fans. As Mynydd Isa pushed forward for an equaliser they were caught out twice again in the closing stages to give West End a 4-1 win which was celebrated wildly at full time by fans and players alike. No doubt the bus trip home would have been a lively affair! Superb trip and the drive home meant I didn't have to suffer the "giant" killing on TV. Cobbs can now concentrate on the League!'*

**03/11/24: Jon T Green** writes - *'I headed back down to South Wales for a nice little Friday/Saturday double - both **Pontypridd** and, especially, **Chepstow** are great towns to visit even if the FAW ground grading requirements for the top*



*three tiers is robbing a lot of places of their character. Pre-fab stand suppliers must be having a field down in the Principality!!!! I know it's progress (well maybe....) but with attendances pretty low outside of the National League I am not sure it's entirely necessary'.*

**03/11/24: Bob Powell** writes - planning permission has been granted to install 6500 square metres of solar panels on the roof of the London Stadium, home of **West Ham United**. The solar covering will be installed by the summer of 2025 and will generate enough energy to power all the venue's major events.

**Boston United** have sacked manager Ian Culverhouse (ex- Norwich City defender) the club are next to bottom in the National League, He got the club promoted last season from National League North via the play-offs.

**Walsall Wood FC** resigned today (Tues 29/10) from the Northern Premier League Midland division. Their playing record will be expunged. The club said they were unable to sustain playing at step 4. Let's hope they can re-group and can come back next season at a lower level.

Hereford FC's new floodlights have hit another delay. Contractors got as far as drilling three holes before they couldn't get deep enough because of the water table. No news how they will resolve this problem?

This concerns **groundhoppers who use trains** to get to games. Hidden away in today's budget regulated train fares will rise in March 2025 by 4.6 % and most railcards will go up by £5. Railcards for disabled passengers remain unchanged.

Anybody planning a visit to **Thorne Colliery FC** (Moorends, Doncaster) of the NCEL should check as they are unable to play on their own ground at the moment. They suffered a fire in May to their changing rooms but were using a different part of the pavilion. Now Thorne Moorends Council have closed the facility, so the club are becoming nomadic.

After completing work **Southend United** have been given the go-ahead to re-open the north-west corner of their Roots Hall ground meaning they can increase capacity by 1400 for their FA Cup with Charlton Athletic on Saturday 2nd November.

BBC Scotland will show live coverage of **East Kilbride** v Falkirk on Monday 2nd December. The programme will start at 7.30pm with ko at 7.45pm (Scottish Cup 3rd round). It will also be available on iPlayer and the BBC Sports website and app. The 4th round draw which includes Premiership sides will also be shown. The other 19 ties in round 3 are scheduled for Saturday November 30th.

**AFC Sudbury** (Southern League Premier Central) have received £1.1 million in funding. They plan an all-weather 3Gg pitch for all its teams and the wider community.

**Hereford FC** supporters are trying to raise £9750 in order to restore the club's former name after Hereford United went bust in 2014. Hereford FC was formed in

its place. The money is needed to cover the cost of changing the ground's signage, complete an inventory write off of stock, change the club's website URL, badge and trademark registration.

**Blyth Spartans FC** seem to have sorted themselves out with local businessman Martin Trinder, the new owner of the club. He has already made his presence felt by sacking 4 staff members including manager David Stockdale.

One of the co-founders of **Guernsey FC** (Isthmian League Southern Central division) has been banned by the island's financial regulator from any involvement in regulated companies, following his involvement in a fraudulent investment fund which collapsed in 2016.

Steve Dewsnip (57) is now commercial director at NPL side **Stalybridge Celtic**. The club said it was aware of the matter and has full confidence in him.

Did any travellers go to watch **Enfield** v Biggleswade on Saturday 26/10 at Hertford Town? The visitors were leading 2-1 into the last minute of stoppage time when Enfield sent their goalkeeper forward for a corner kick and he scored with an overhead kick to rescue a point.

NPL West Division - on Saturday 2nd November - Stafford Rangers v **Wythenshawe Town** was postponed as Wythenshawe Town have been suspended by the league for failing to comply with financial fair play rules...

...further to Wythenshawe Town's suspension the NPL said the club have failed to reveal the extent of their debts to HMRC and the club's landlord despite numerous requests. The league had no option but suspend them until they release this information.

## OCTOBER 2024

**29/10/24: Jonathan Holloway** writes - 'Last Saturday I went to **Rugby Town** to see my hometown club, Worcester City, play there. It was an even first half with Rugby snatching a goal just before the interval. City then came roaring out of the blocks in the second period and rattled in 5 goals in 10 minutes! It was just ridiculous. They eventually won 6-1. It doesn't bode well for Rugby, which is a shame as they are a great little club and have a great ground too. I hope Worcester City will have one like it in the future'.

**27/10/24: Bob Powell** writes - Gedling Borough Council applied for investment from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and as a result they got £220k in funding which means several sports clubs in the Nottingham area will benefit including **Calverton MW** (Notts Senior League) who will get a £100k for a new 3g pitch.

The **NCEL** have announced a partnership with *Pitcherogps* an innovative tracking system.

The draw has taken place for the 2nd round of the **FA Vase**. Matches will take place on Saturday 9th November - winners £900 and losers £275.

**Inverness Caledonian Thistle** have gone into administration and have been docked 15 points. Administrators will attempt to find new owners but if that fails the club could disappear as assets could be sold and the money raised be distributed to creditors.

**Tonbridge Angels** are probably setting a first as they are doing an-overnight stay for a league match. They are due to play Truro on Saturday 26th October and the round trip is 560 miles. The team are setting out on Friday morning and manager Jay Saunders said we want to maximise preparation for this game.

**Wrexham FC** say on the re-build of the kop stand it will be completed in 2026. Work on the new 5500 capacity stand was due to start in 2025 but this has been delayed by what the club call additional complications. The work will be completed in time to stage the UEFA U19's Championship Final tournament. The new stand will have provision for safe standing, hospitality and accessible seating.

**The Irish FA** say they are confident that Northern Ireland's Nations League match v Belarus on Friday November 15th at Windsor Park will go ahead. There was uncertainty over whether the Belarus players and staff would be granted visas by the UK government because of Belarus' continued support for Russia in the war against Ukraine.

**Farsley Celtic** are having problems with their pitch. The last home game v Spennymoor Town was played at Bradford Park Avenue. The club are planning more upgrades with led floodlights, an electronic scoreboard and refurbished dressing rooms.

Five games in the **FA Cup 1st round** will be played on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> November:

**MK Dons** v Wimbledon (ko 12.30pm); **Sutton United** v Birmingham City (ko 12.30pm (live on ITV 1 & ITVx)); **Boreham Wood** v Leyton Orient (ko 14.00pm); **Curzon Ashton** v Mansfield Town (ko 14.00pm) and **Harrogate Town** v Wrexham (ko 15.30 pm (live on ITVx)).

**Walsall Wood** (NPL Midland Division) - yesterday afternoon's game at Quorn 26/10 was postponed. This is 3 games in a row that Wood have failed to play. They now have been suspended by the Northern Premier League. Worrying times for the NPL with Wood, Blyth Spartans and Bamber Bridge all facing an uncertain future.

**Keith "Guatemala" Walker** - Sad news to report in that well known Groundhopper, Keith "Guatemala" Walker, who was residing in Norwich, sadly passed away on Wednesday morning. He was one of the more charismatic Groundhoppers on the circuit and will be much missed by all who knew him. R.I.P. Keith.

**Hitchin Town** - As I am sure you are all well aware Brett Donnelly is no longer manager of Hitchin Town FC. The club issued the following statement -

After a disappointing start to the season the Management Committee have unfortunately had to make the decision that to give us the best chance of remaining at Step 3 this season, we regrettably need to make a change. We have today had to inform Brett Donnelly that we will be commencing the process to appoint a new manager. We thank Brett for his passion and commitment to the role and we recognise the huge amount of effort he has put in against a backdrop of very difficult circumstances and a bit of bad luck. We have agreed with Michael Jones that he will take up the role of Interim Manager. We will look to provide further updates when these are available. As was said in the statement Michael Jones is the interim manager and he has already been extremely busy speaking to the squad and arranging a back-room team.

**20/10/24: Jon T Green** writes - *'...another super hop, this time to deepest, darkest metropolitan Essex to watch **Benfleet FC**. Not the most visually attractive part of the country but then you find a ground with a fir trees and gentle slopes in the background and with the sun shining brightly it becomes the best place in the world. Amazing, isn't it? A cracking game which was only decided on penalties when the visiting captain missed the 14th spot kick. Cruel but that's football for you'*.

**20/10/24: Gary Spooner** writes - *'FA Vase yesterday as you predicted though no magic and a pretty turgid game at **Letchworth Garden City Eagles FC** which went to form with BU winning 1-0 - first game this season where I've not seen at least 2 goals'*.

**20/10/24: Bob Powell** writes - Carl Magnay has left his job as first team coach at **Carlisle United** and has been appointed as the manager of **Gateshead**.

Tickets are now on sale for **The New Saints UEFA Conference League** matches being played at Shrewsbury Town FC:

Thursday 24th October v FC Astana (Kazakhstan); Thursday 28th November v Djurgarden FC (Sweden) and Thursday 12th December v Panathinaikos FC (Greece).

FA Cup heroes **Harborough Town** (Southern League Premier Central Division) had to improve their facilities before March 2025 or face relegation. They now have planning permission to build a new 154-seater stand. The club's co-chairman Pete Dougan said the work could be completed by January.

**Teversal FC** near Sutton in Ashfield (Central Midland Alliance Premier Division South) is scoring a sensation with fans across the world thanks to its unusual away end. Visiting supporters are housed in old trolley shelters salvaged from a Tesco supermarket that closed 20 years ago. Club secretary Kevin Newton said the reused features attracted the attention of social media, with people travelling from all parts of the UK to take selfies and see them in person. He added the shelters had become a much-loved part of the ground.

On Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> October **Blyth Spartans** dropped to the bottom of the table as Warrington Rylands won to move above them. A statement was issued by Blyth's

owner Irfan Liaquat saying he has put the club up for sale just 180 days after taking it over. He said he is in advanced stages with a strong party for a potential sale of the club.

Latest - The club have postponed their next 2 home matches (Sat 19th Oct v Gainsborough Trinity and Tues 22 Oct v FC United of Manchester). Both the club secretary and general manager have left, and the club has no volunteers to run it.

**FA Cup 1st round** - the following matches will be **shown on TV**:

Friday 1st Nov - **Tamworth** v Huddersfield Town (ko 7.45pm on BBC2); Saturday 2nd Nov - **Northampton Tn** v Kettering Tn (ko 3.30pm on BBC2); Sunday 3rd Nov - **Sutton United** v Birmingham City (ko 12.30pm on ITV1); Sunday 3rd Nov - **Harrogate Tn** v Wrexham (ko 3.30pm on ITVx) and Monday 4th Nov - **Chesham United** v Lincoln City (ko 7.15pm on ITV4). Update on prize money - winners £45k and losers £15k.

Winter has arrived yet but sadly the weather is still causing problems! On Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> October Northern League Division 1 - **Crook Town** 0 v Newcastle Blue Star 2 - the match was abandoned after 58 minutes due to fog!

**FA Cup 1st round** - Saturday November 2<sup>nd</sup> (ko 5.30pm) - **Northampton** v Kettering. Anybody wishing to go to this game tickets are going on sale from Friday 18th October with prices at: £22 adult, £18 65+/U21; £11 U18, £7 U14 (must be accompanied by a paying adult) and free for U7.

**Inverness Caledonian Thistle** have failed to reach a deal with an interested buyer and the club's future remains in doubt. It is facing administration. meaning a 15-point penalty and likely relegation from SFL 1 where they currently sit second bottom.

**Westfields FC** of the Hellenic League Premier Division had to postpone yesterday's home game v Brimscombe & Thrupp after Wednesday's deluge caused a local brook to overflow leaving the ground under 3 feet of water. The club cannot access the damage until the water recedes.

Welsh Cup 2nd round - anybody who went to **TNS** v Llangollen Town on Friday 18th October were treated to a goal feast as TNS equalled the biggest winning margin in the competition by beating their opponents 16-0 (HT 9-0).

**The FA Vase 1st round** proper match at **Wakefield** (v North Shields) postponed today (Sunday 20th October) will now be played on Saturday 26th October. North shields were not impressed despite a bad weather forecast with no early inspection planned and they had arrived before the match referee called the game off due to a waterlogged pitch).

**From Boreham Wood FC** - we are pleased to announce that the date of our exciting FA Cup First Round Proper tie against Leyton Orient has now been



confirmed to be played on Sunday 3rd November (KO 2pm) at The Mangata Pay UK Stadium, Meadow Park.

Tickets will go on sale on Monday morning (21<sup>st</sup> October) at 9.30am to season ticket holders aged 16 & over exclusively for a period of 7 days.

Tickets will then be released to those that are on our ticketing database on Friday 25th October at 9.30am.

The prices have been agreed and are as follows: Adults/OAP - £20, Under 18 (Ages 14-17) - £15, Under 14 (Ages 5-13) - £10 and Under 5 (Ages 1-4) - £5.

**13/10/24: Jon T Green** writes - *Hope you had an enjoyable hop this weekend, definitely a feel of Autumn in the air isn't there? I was lucky enough to pick up a superb "miners' welfare" at Harworth on Friday night and then Denaby Main the following day - both are outstanding venues with the former being one of the friendliest and most welcoming clubs I have visited in a long time. I really do feel so privileged that we have this amazing hobby and get to experience some truly exceptional days out.*

**13/10/24: Gary Spooner** writes - *It was a trip to Wales yesterday and another beautiful scenic ground at Llanefydd. As you can see from the pics some of the game was played in monsoon conditions and some of the game in brilliant sunshine. It's almost like pics of two different games! Decent game despite the conditions as the hosts came from 1 down to lead 3-1 before Llangefni scored a 94th minute consolation goal. Very friendly welcome and an excellent day out.*

**13/10/24: Bob Powell** writes - plans for a new east stand at **Blackpool FC** (capacity 2500) will be submitted next month. Work is expected to start next spring. Adjoining the stadium will be community pitches and will be known as the Revoe Sports Village and will be run by Blackpool FC Community Trust. There will be 1 full size 11-a-side pitch and a 15 a-side pitch (both grass pitches with floodlights). Work will start in the new year.

Problems for **Walsall Wood FC** (NPL Midlands division) - on Saturday October 5th they were due to be at their hosts, the league leaders Corby Town. But the match was postponed after manager Ian Long quit stating the players have not been paid and he had suffered a string of promises. It's not clear if the players refused to play after not being paid. Let's hope the club can sort these issues out quickly.

The draw for the **1st round of the FA Trophy** took place on Monday 7th October - matches will be played on Saturday 26th October; winners will get £3k with losers receiving £775. One interesting tie is Dover v Sittingbourne.

NCEL Premier Division side **Tadcaster Albion** have said that without government or council help the club could go bust and disappear. The ground is situated next to the River Wharfe and was under water six times last season and chairman Andy



Charlesworth said they have spent £100k repairing flood damage which can't continue.

Northern League Division 1 side **Kendal Town** suffered a break in at their stadium. Vandals caused £300 worth of damage as well as stealing £500 worth of equipment.

Good news for **Brantham Athletic** (ECL Premier division) - they are linking up with Paris Saint Germain who are going to open their new academy at Brantham.

Worrying times for **Reading FC** - it's said their last takeover collapsed because a Chinese Citizen's Bank own the rights to Reading's stadium, The chairman Dai Yongge owes the bank £55m. Nobody will buy the club without the stadium and the Chinese Bank will only release the stadium when they recover their £55m.

**Hereford United FC** - planning application for their new lights has been approved. The delighted chairman said work will begin on Monday 14th October and if everything goes to plan the new towers and led lights should be ready for the game v Farsley Celtic on Saturday 26th October.

Great news for **Shawbury United** of NWCL 1st Division South - they return home after 32 years having shared at Wem and Ludlow. The new ground has been built on land that was donated to them. They are at home on 19th October v Stafford Town (current league leaders). Their address is Shawbury United Community Sports and Recreation Centre, Caradine Road, Shawbury, Shrewsbury SY4 4PB.

NPL side (West division) City of **Liverpool FC** who have had no permanent home ground since they were formed in 2015 and are currently sharing at Bootle FC, have been in talks with Liverpool City Council for an asset transfer which would have seen them take over the management of Rathbone Park off Edge Lane. The club had hoped to build a 2000 capacity stadium, but chairman Paul Manning said that he received a letter telling him the bid had been rejected. A council spokesman said the proposal didn't meet council policy.

Tuesday October 15th **FA Cup 4th Qualifying round replays** (all games ko at 7.45 pm): **Boston United** v Gainsborough; **Brackley** v Hartlepool; **Gateshead** v Hednesford; **Maidenhead United** v Taunton; **Peterborough Sports** v Rushall Olympic and **Solihull** v Altrincham.

**Tonbridge Angels** reached the 1st round proper for only the second time in 52 years. They are ball no 75 in Monday night's draw.

**13/10/24: Cambridge City FC** - the stadium has been buzzing with activity as preparations ramp up for the eagerly awaited opening game. While a confirmed fixture is yet to be announced, we are working hard to finally get the stadium open, with the ambition of the first game being an Isthmian North match early in November. However, this is not guaranteed, we are still awaiting the switch-on of electrical systems which is imminent. A final visit from the FA to inspect the work

we have carried out and regulatory paperwork for temporary buildings is still to be approved. This all needs to be signed off before an official announcement can be made. As soon as we have the green light, you will hear from us. We will also need your help, to give the stadium a 'spring clean' so keep an eye out. If you can come and help, many hands make light work! Our regular volunteers still visit every Wednesday morning if you are free why not pop down around 10am and join them.

**06/10/24: Gary Spooner** writes - 'Up early for the 7.30 train to London for a double yesterday. First up was the hop game at **Meridian** after which I went to **Glebe**. Neither game particularly great but trains and buses behaved and plenty of chat with other hoppers made it a good day out'.

**06/10/24: Bob Powell** writes - motorists are in for a shock if planning to visit **Everton's** new stadium due to open for season 2025/26 The all-seater ground at Bramley Moor Dock will have a capacity of 52,888. Liverpool City Council is planning a football matchday parking zone and proposals will cover an area within a 30-minute walk from the stadium encompassing the Ten Streets district of Liverpool.

Just heard from the FA - Tuesday night's (Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> October) FA Cup matches that were postponed will now be played next Tuesday 8th October (ko 7.45pm). The 3<sup>rd</sup> Qualifying round games include: **Biggleswade Town** v Alfreton; **Chesham United** v Bishops Cleeve and **Lowestoft Town** v Haringey Borough.

Note - Bishops Cleeve have made a nice gesture to all fans who had a wasted journey that they will have free coach travel next week.

Any fans planning a trip to the Newcastle area please note that the **Tyne & Wear Metro line** is closed from Monday 28th October until Friday 1st November while major infrastructure work is carried out. This will cause problems for Chelsea fans who are playing their league cup match at Newcastle on Tuesday 29th October.

Despite the FA saying the games would be played at the senior club's grounds last Tuesday night's game in the National League cup - **Dagenham's** game against Spurs (was played at Dagenham) produced a cracker; it's a shame only 184 people bothered to watch it result in Dagenham 5 v Spurs U21 5 - Spurs fought back from 4-1 down and won the game on penalties.

**The FA Cup 4th Qualifying round** - The BBC will show **Hednesford Town** (NPL Premier Division) v Gateshead (National League Premier division) on Saturday 12th October (ko 3.30pm).

A game with cheap admission - Friday 15th November (ko 7.00pm) at **Chesterfield FC** for England elite squad v Germany U20's - admission adults £5.00 and concessions £3.00. Germany heads the group with England in 2nd place.

**The National League Cup** competition group stages is free to air on NLTV. To get coverage click on to National League tv.com and register for a free account.

**Blyth Spartans** are a club in crisis. The fans boycotted yesterday's FA Trophy 3rd Qualifying Round match - result Blyth 0 v Stockton 2 (att. 385 with 130 from Stockton). The fans are disillusioned with the overall club operations from new owner Irfan Liaquat he has suffered some business failures, the club were relegated from the National League North last season and at this moment the club are in the bottom 4 in the NPL Premier division. According to one supporter group the future looks bleak.

**Worcester City** who it's thought would have been on their new ground this season at Worcester Community Sports Park at Fernhill Heath have not yet submitted a planning application for the new ground. It's understood an application will be submitted before the end of the year, meanwhile, to stay in the NPL Midland division they must improve facilities at their temporary ground at Claines Lane. They have lodged a planning application for a terraced stand at the Claines lane end of the ground.

Anybody thinking of going to **UEFA Nations League match Belarus** v Northern Ireland don't! Due to UEFA restrictions on Belarus the match will be played at the ZTE Arena in Zalaegerszeg in Hungary behind closed doors on Saturday 12th October (ko 7.45pm).

**06/10/24: Steve Ayre** writes - *Bedfordshire County League Division Two North 05/10/24 at STEWARTBY SPORTS FIELD. **Green End Rovers First** 3 v M&DH Clapham Sports First 1. Green End play in the field where Stewartby played albeit possibly a different pitch arrangement. The new pavilion shows the old changing rooms were behind the social club (pictured in the album gallery) where the empty goals are on the second pitch (possibly the former first pitch). Also pictured are the impressive buildings of the village once home to London Brick Company'.*

## SEPTEMBER 2024

**29/09/24: Bob Powell** writes - the draw for the **4th Qualifying Round of the FA Cup** will be on Monday 30th September at 3.00 pm and will be broadcast live on Talk Sport. Matches will take place over the weekend of the 12th October. Prize money: winners £9375 and losers £3125.

The draw for the **1st Round Proper of the FA Cup** (featuring 48 EFL clubs and 32 non-league clubs) will take place on Monday 14th October and will be broadcast on BBC 2 at 7.00 pm from Valley Parade home of Bradford City. Matches will take place over the weekend of Saturday 2nd November. Prize money: winners £40k but no mention of losers yet.

**Hereford FC** put in an application for new floodlights at Edgar Street in the spring. So far, no response from the council. Hereford chairman Chris Ammonds said the delay is putting the whole future of the club at risk. Apparently, Herefordshire Council said it's the National Highways that's delaying Hereford's new led floodlights. The NH which manages the A49 (it runs by the Edgar Street ground) said it's due to a technical approval process.

**Hundon FC** (near Haverhill/Sudbury) of the Cambridgeshire County League are playing back in the village after having a new pavilion/changing rooms built. They have spent the last 4 seasons at Clare FC as their previous changing rooms were deemed unsafe.

Just an update on **Wimbledon FC** - the ground was completely flooded with a sink hole has appearing at one end. 100,000 litres of water was pumped from the ground. The Wimbledon chairman said it could cost towards £1 million pounds to be put right. This postponed league cup tie (v Newcastle United) will be played next Tuesday at St James Park. The club were due to host Accrington Stanley on Sat 28th September by trying to get another venue in south London to stage the match but couldn't and so the match was postponed by the EFL. On Sat 12th October Wimbledon are due to face Carlisle United and there must also be some doubt as to whether Plough Lane can stage the game.

In the new **National League Cup** featuring u21's sides from the Premier League and Championship sides, **Reading's u21's** have withdrawn and been replaced by **Derby County U21's**.

Sat 5th October - National League South **Worthing** v Maidstone United (ko 3.00pm) - at last Worthing will open their new north stand.

**Winchester City FC** returned home on Saturday 28 September in the FA Cup 3rd Qualifying Round v Weymouth. The club have been playing at the Hampshire FA ground in Basingstoke. The ground has undergone major redevelopment including a new 3G pitch, new led floodlights, improvement to the stand, new fencing and dug outs and hard standing areas. Any traveller wanting to pay a visit, the club have several home games during October.

A £23m redevelopment of a sports centre will begin as **Plymouth Argyle** said plans have been approved to transform Brickfields in Devonport into a sports excellence centre. It will have new football pitches and athletics facilities and be run by Plymouth Argyle Community Trust and become the permanent home for Plymouth Argyle's youth team, the academy and Plymouth ladies' team. It will have new grass and all weather 3G pitches and be home for city of Plymouth's athletic club.

The **Northern League** have announced an **Easter Ground Hop for 2026**, but there are no match details yet.

Big changes for the **JD Cymru Premier division** for season 2026/27 onwards. The league will move from 12 clubs to 16. Each club will play each other home and away and after match 30 the league will split into 3 separate groups with the top 6 clubs playing each other once more. The team at the top after match 35 will be champions. Clubs ranked 2-6 will qualify for at least the end of season European Qualification play offs. Those ranked 7-10 (the European challenger) will play each other once more at the end of match number 33 with the top team claiming the last spot in the end of season European qualifying play offs. Clubs ranked 11-16 - the survival zone will also play each other once more at the end of match number 35 the clubs in 15 and 16th places will automatically be relegated with the club in 14th place competing in the end of season relegation play offs.

**Oxford City** - after sacking manager Sam Cox they have re-appointed Ross Jenkins (back from Boreham Wood) as their new manager.

**Bamber Bridge** (NPL Premier Division) need £30k to see out the season. So far in 24 hours supporters have raised £6k.

**The four Welsh clubs that play in the EFL** are in talks with the Welsh FA to enter a Welsh cup competition in order to qualify for European football. Entering the Welsh League cup currently known as the Nathaniel MG Cup gives a chance to represent Wales in the Europa Conference League.

**29/09/24 - Chris Newbold (Hitchin Town FC)** writes - just to advise that next Tuesday 1st October we're playing Biggleswade United for the "Top Field Cup" which hasn't been contested since 2017. The Cup was originated as a result of our "Save Top Field" campaign in 2015 and was fully supported at the time by Guillem Balague, the Biggleswade United Chairman. It was contested in 2016 and 2017, won both times by Hitchin, and hasn't been contested since. Tickets are on sale online and can be bought at our Match Ticket Window on the night - card payment only, no cash. Prices £5 Adult, £3 Concession, £2 Teenager, £1 Child Under 13 accompanying an adult, Free for Seniors Over 80. Kick Off is 7:30pm. We hope to produce a team sheet for the game.

**24/09/24: Gary Spooner** writes - *First game on our Scottish trip was a belter at **Halkirk United**. It was 1 each after 90 seconds (!) and ended up with Inverness Athletic winning 4-3. Cracking ground, very friendly locals and the pies and homemade blueberry muffins were superb. Hopping heaven!*

*Second game in Scotland was a midweek revisit to **Brora** who beat local rivals Wick 5-0. No pics from that one as 8pm kick off meant it was dark on arrival.*

*Third and final game was **Linton Hotspur** v Edinburgh United. Another cracking rural ground with an excellent set up and a much bigger crowd than I expected. The obligatory pie was sampled which was good too. Edinburgh won 3-1 though*

*Linton can consider themselves unlucky as they hit the post, hit the bar twice and had a penalty saved. Much interaction with the locals due to me being a stranger in town and wearing a Halkirk United woolly hat which I had bought the previous Saturday.*

**22/09/24: Bob Powell** writes - the Republic of Ireland league side **Dundalk FC** have been saved. Bottom of the league and having been unable to pay staff for several weeks, it is understood that local barrister John Temple is leading a consortium of investors to keep the club going.

**Radcliffe v Bury** - the forthcoming FA Cup 3<sup>rd</sup> Qualifying Round tie on 28<sup>th</sup> September will certainly have an edge as the two clubs are only 2.5 miles apart. When Bury AFC was formed, they spent three seasons ground sharing at Radcliffe, before merging with Bury FC and moving into Gigg Lane. The game is all ticket with an allocation of 600 tickets being made available for away supporters.

**Northampton Town FC** have come up with a novel idea to raise funds on the 30th birthday of their move to Sixfields Stadium by allowing fans to have their names engraved in paved stones outside the west stand. Each stone will cost between £65 and £425 with proceeds invested back into the club's academy.

**Bridlington Town** of the Northern Premier League East division was sold a few months ago to HDM Worldwide (a solar panel energy firm). As a result, the club are having 400 rooftop solar panels fitted. They can purchase the energy at much lower than grid supplied prices. A club official has said that the savings will lead to cheaper ticket prices, amongst other benefits.

**A new cup competition** featuring u21 teams from the Premier League, Championship and first teams from the National League has been established. The u21 teams will play the games in their own stadia with the National League sides keeping the gate receipts. The cup is a 32-team competition with 16 teams from the u21's and 16 teams from the National League. It will consist of a group stage with 4 groups of eight with the two best placed teams in each group advancing to a knockout stage to determine the winner.

Competition round dates: Group stages - round 1 on 1st/2nd October; round 2 on 5th/6<sup>th</sup> November; round 3 on 3rd/4th December; round 4 on 21st/22nd January with 1/4 finals on 5th/6th February; S/Finals on 11th/12<sup>th</sup> March and the Final on 1st/2<sup>nd</sup> April.

The BBC will show the FA Cup 3rd Qualifying round tie at **Wythenshawe Town** (NPL West Div) v Farsley Celtic (National League North) on Saturday 28th September (ko 12.30pm). The match can be viewed via BBC I-Player or the red button. Both clubs receive £2k from the FA as the chosen match.



**Radcliffe Borough** v Buxton National League North match on 21<sup>st</sup> September was called off as a mark of respect after the sudden shock death of Radcliffe chairman Paul Hilton.

**Bedford Town** - after the ground improvements were completed (3G pitch & new lights), Bedford Town were back playing at The New Eyrie on Saturday where a crowd of 923 saw them beat Leiston 2-0.

**15/09/24: Bob Powell** writes - **Goole AFC** (NCELP) have got some great news... the club has received £2.2m in funding to give their Victoria Pleasure Ground a major facelift. Most of the money came from the Football Foundation. The club hasn't said yet what improvements they intend to make.

Work at **Cardiff City's** new training base has begun in Hensol, Vale of Glamorgan. The new 44-acre site should be open in 2 seasons time. It will have 15 pitches, a 2-storey central building for a state-of-the-art gym, pool, treatment centre and offices. There will be spectator terraces for the pitches and a 123-space car park.

The draw for the **3rd Qualifying round of the FA Cup** will happen on Monday 16th September. The FA will release details of the draw at 1.00pm. Matches will take place over the weekend of Saturday 28th September with winners receiving £5625 and losers £1875.

A surprising story has appeared in the Guardian newspaper saying that **Chelsea FC** are in talks to build a new stadium at Earls Court because the capacity of 40343 at Stamford Bridge is not enough.

Western League Premier Division side **Wellington AFC** have applied for planning permission for new led floodlights. If granted they hope to have the lights installed for the start of next season when they also plan more ground improvements over the next 12 months.

One game to keep an eye on is **Bishop's Cleeve** v Torquay United (Bishop's Cleeve is a village near Cheltenham and the club is in the Southern League Division 1 South). I am told the village is buzzing and they regard this as the biggest game in the club's history. The chairman expects the ground record to be broken on Saturday with Cheltenham Town playing away at Salford City. He is hoping a few floaters will turn up to cheer on the underdogs. **JUST IN** - great day for Bishops Cleeve they outplayed Torquay United 3-0 before a crowd of almost 1200.

Isthmian League Division 1 North - Tuesday's game (10th September) between **Maldon & Tiptree** v Brightlingsea was abandoned due to floodlight failure. Maldon have said when the game is rearranged everyone will be admitted free of charge.

**West Witney Council** are to spend £1m upgrading the West Witney Sports Ground which already has a large clubhouse with 2 bars. The money will be spent on a new 3g pitch with floodlights and a new sports pavilion for football. FC Mills (men's

team in the Witney & District League) already play there so do Tower Hill FC as well as various women's teams and boys and girls youth teams.

Further to my earlier story a few months ago...**Luton Town FC** have now submitted a planning application for their new 25,000 capacity stadium (the Power Court site on land adjacent to Luton railway station). If everything goes to plan, they hope to be playing there for season 2027-28.

The chances of **Northern Ireland** hosting matches at the Euro 2028 football tournament appear to have gone. The UK government has said it will not provide funding for the redevelopment of Casement Park. The Irish FA has said it will discuss the situation with UEFA.

All the ground improvements at **Larkhall Athletic** are now complete. They include a new 3g pitch, a new 250-seater stand and new LED floodlights.

**Herts Senior County League News** - I've been told through a third party that all clubs in the Premier Division now have to play their games at grounds which have seats, even though this is a Step 7 division. With this in mind, **Cheshunt Development** will soon be erecting a small stand at their already railed off pitch (with dugouts) behind the main stadium pitch and next to their caged 3G pitch.

**08/09/24: Bob Powell** writes - more good news for **The New Saints** with Brad Young Welsh football's leading scorer last season has signed for Saudi Pro League club Al-Orobah. Young was the Cymru Premier's golden boot winner for season 23/24. He is a former Aston Villa Academy graduate. The club haven't disclosed the fee, but it's understood to be a record for a Welsh top-flight club.

NWCL 1st Division North side **Route One Rovers** (from Bradford) have been expelled from the FA Vase after fielding two ineligible players in their win at Northallerton Town. It now means that **Northallerton Town** will now be at home to Bedlington Terriers in the 2nd Qualifying Round on Saturday 21st September (ko 3.00 pm).

Anybody who hasn't done **Telford Town** in the WMRL...the club play at the Key Worker Nation Stadium (School Grove Telford TF26BQ). The club were previously known as Wellington Amateurs but were taken over in 2024 by former Hednesford Town owner Hayden Dando who changed their name to Telford Town.

**Aston Villa** have enraged their fans by putting the Champion's League home match tickets up to a staggering £85, £94 and £97.

The BBC is showing the FA Cup 2nd Qualifying round match on Sat 14th September at **Lordswood** v Sittingbourne (a good old Kent derby game! The match will kick off at 12.30pm and can be viewed by accessing the red button on BBC I-Player. Both teams receive £2k from the FA for being chosen for TV.

A new community sports hub has received a grant of £3.5 m from the Premier League, the FA and Football Foundation. The new hub will be located on the outskirts of Hailsham in East Sussex with work expected to start in the Autumn and be completed by 2026. Wealden Borough Council said the hub will provide sports and community facilities which can be used all year round.

**08/09/24: Gary Spooner** writes - *I decided on **Frimley Green** v Hamworthy United based on it being 2<sup>nd</sup> v 3<sup>rd</sup> and Frimley Green's previous 2 results being a 5-4 win and an 8-4 defeat! In fact, Frimley Green's first 8 games had produced 44 goals whilst Hamworthy United's first 8 games had produced 37 goals. I wasn't expecting a nil-nil, and I certainly wasn't disappointed. The game was a cracker. Frimley took an early lead only for Hamworthy to score twice to lead themselves. Before half time Frimley had equalised, and it was 2 each at half time. Second half saw loads more chances but just the one goal, a winner for Frimley who went top of the table. Trains were all on time, I avoided the rain, and a cracking day out was had.*

**01/09/24: Bob Powell** writes - Leicester Senior League Division 1 side **Mountsorrel FC** should be on a new ground by 2026. The club have been playing their home games at Rawlins Academy school in Quorn. Charnwood Borough Council are to spend £250k improving sports facilities in Mountsorrel. In addition, Mountsorrel Castle Cricket Club will have a new pitch and pavilion in Seaton Road with new football pitches also created to the side of the cricket pitch which will be home to Mountsorrel senior and junior teams. If all goes to plan the grounds should be up and running by 2026.

FA Vase 1st Qualifying round on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> August (3.00 pm) - **Tooting Bec** v Newhaven FC (at Chipstead FC). This match was cancelled due to Tooting Bec forgetting to bring their playing kit. A club spokesman said due to a miscommunication we arrived at the ground without our playing kit...it was a monumental error! The match referee decided not to allow a later kick off. No word yet from the FA. I expect they are awaiting the referee's report before deciding what action to take.

Following some media reports it is understood that **Tooting Bec have since withdrawn** from the FA Vase. Newhaven who will now be at home to Lydd Town on Saturday 21st September should get the £550 winner's prize money. Under FA rules although it appears Tooting Bec could be fined they may also be entitled to £160 losers prize money!!

A word of praise for **Callington Town (SWPL)** who won their first every vase game beating Western League Premier Division Shepton Mallet 5-4 pens after a 1-1 draw. They now visit another Western League side Buckland Athletic in the 2nd Qualifying round played on Saturday 21st September (ko 3.00pm).

Anybody planning to do the **Wales Nations League match in Montenegro** on Monday 9th September please note the match has been moved to Niksic due to the poor condition of the pitch at the Podgorica National Stadium. The venue was changed after UEFA inspectors visited the PNS. Niksic's City Stadium is the home of club side FK Sutjeska and regularly host Montenegro Under 21 matches.

Good news - the **ASLEF** train drivers working for LNER have called their planned strikes off (they were supposed to go on strike every weekend from Saturday 31st August until mid- November).

**The New Saints** are considering playing their home Europa Conference matches at Shrewsbury Town's ground. In their group stage matches they will face: Fiorentina, Shamrock Rovers, Panathinaikos, Djurgarden (Sweden), Astana (Kazakhstan) and Celje (Slovenia).

The draw for the **2nd Qualifying Round of the FA Cup** will take place on Monday 2nd September at 1.00 pm. Matches will be played over the weekend of Saturday 14th September with prize money of £3375 going to the winners with the losers receiving £1125.

## AUGUST 2024

**26/08/24: Jon T Green** writes - *Just a few quick pictures from a Peterborough and District League game at **Moulton Harrox FC** I went to last week - Moulton is a gorgeous village with England's tallest windmill and a glorious church. No match report from this one as I couldn't source any team sheets.....not that the 6-0 home win would have been much of a story!!!!*

**26/08/24: Steve Hardy** writes - *Here's a report and a few photos from yesterday's visit to Wednesfield (for **Wednesfield Community** v Atherstone Community in the FA Vase First Round Qualifying). For once I thoroughly enjoyed it too. First 9-2 result I have ever had!*

**25/08/24: Gary Spooner** writes: *'No Vase game for me yesterday in the end. Looking at the dreadful weather in the east we decided to head west instead and were rewarded with half a belting game in the sun at **Greenfield FC**. In truth the first half was dire. Mynydd Isa led 2-0 with the second goal from a hotly disputed penalty. Second half was brilliant. Greenfield stormed back to lead 3-2 before Mynydd Isa scored a late equaliser. Cracking stuff!!*

**25/08/24: Bob Powell** writes - a word of caution for travellers who use trains for getting to matches...the **ASLEF union has announced strike action** on all LNER services out of King's Cross station for 11 weekends starting on Saturday 31st August until Sunday 10th November.

The draw was made on Monday 19/08 for the **FA Cup 1st Qualifying round** matches to be played over the weekend of Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> August. Winners will get £2250 with losers receiving £750.

Gloucester County League side **Hanham Athletic** (address Vicarage Road Hanham Bristol BS153AH) - I am not certain if programmes are available at the ground but they did a very good electronic issue for Tuesday's 20/8 game v Bromley Heath that can easily be downloaded.

Congratulations to **Silsden AFC** who are through to the FA Cup 1<sup>st</sup> Qualifying round for the first time in 20 years after beating 8th tier opponents Atherton Collieries 2-0. Their reward is an away trip to NWCL side West Disbury & Chorlton on Saturday 31st August (ko 3.00pm).

Great news re **Newbury FC**. The club are returning to Faraday Road after 6 years away. They will be playing in the Thames Valley Premier League this season. West Berkshire Council have procured portable changing facilities, alongside a portable clubhouse (where the former clubhouse stood) and a (soon to be added) portable spectator stand. The club hope to play their first home game at Faraday Road in September. Club members are hopeful in time the club can get back to former glories.

FA Cup Preliminary round replay on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> August at **Millbrook FC** v AFC Stoneham (1-1) was abandoned due to floodlight failure. After a long delay the FA have announced that will it now be played at Millbrook's Test Park ground on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> August (ko 7.45pm).

Eastern Counties League side **Enfield Borough** have sacked their manager with immediate effect after he was convicted of causing grievous bodily harm and child cruelty.

The BBC will show the FA Cup 1st Qualifying round tie between NECL side **Campion AFC** (Bradford) v Blyth Spartans (NPL) on Saturday 31st August (ko 12.30pm). The match will be shown on I-player (via the red button). Both teams will receive a £1k fee from the FA for being chosen for tv.

I hope no travellers got caught out today (24/08) attending the NWCL Premier division match between **Goole AFC** and Penistone Church (3-2). The game was played behind closed doors after a ruling by the West Riding FA following crowd trouble at previous games. I hope that there is no more punishment in the pipeline to add to Goole's troubles as manager Nathan Heliwell resigned on Friday 23/08 after the club's poor start to the season.

**21/08/24: Steve Hardy** - **UK Non-League Football Programme Database** - Our outstanding contributor, programme guru, super hopper and dedicated archivist has now COMPLETELY UPDATED all sections of his extensive UK Non-League Football Programme Database featuring 1000's of clubs covering English, Scottish,

Welsh, Northern Irish, Ladies, School and Youth and Sunday football. The impressive catalogue lists include EVERY KNOWN CLUB THAT HAS ISSUED up to the end of the 2023-24 season. Reference to all alterations/additions since last year's database are handily highlighted in red ink for ease of identification. Check out the selection of new programmes (including covers) Steve has tracked down since last season. As you will appreciate an incredible amount of work has gone into making this possible and we are indebted once again to Steve for his painstaking efforts. You'll agree it's an absolutely fantastic resource for programme collectors and ground hoppers alike. To find out more simply click on the following link shown below. Enjoy browsing! [footballgroundsinfocus.com/UKPDBHome.htm](http://footballgroundsinfocus.com/UKPDBHome.htm)

**19/08/24: Jon T Green** - writes: *'A proper exciting FA Cup tie for me over the weekend, and a bit of a giant killing to boot. Nice to see that the competition is alive and well in the lower reaches of the game, if not in the professional ranks'*.

**WebEd** - Jon attended the Town Ground as **Heanor Town** (UCL 1N) beat Hinckley Leicester Road (NPL Midland Division) 3-2 in a Preliminary Round tie.

**18/08/24: Bob Powell** - writes: Saturday August 10th - **Romford** v Benfleet (Essex Senior League), this match was postponed after an unnamed Benfleet player on his way to training on Thursday 08/08 was involved in a serious car crash. He underwent surgery and now thankfully has regained consciousness. Everybody in the football world wishes him well.

**Southend United FC** can confirm following a successful appeal, against the requirements for the club to provide a £1m bond, has been formally withdrawn. Despite their match being chosen for live TV under the new Dazn deal (Southend 1 v York City 1), it still attracted a very good gate of 7962.

**Truro City** returned home after 4 years away. They lost their first game at their new stadium 1-2 to Dorking Wanderers in front of a healthy attendance of 2676.

Isthmian Premier Division side **Lewes FC** have left themselves open to ridicule and being the butt of jokes after signing a 2-year deal with their new shirt sponsors " *Who gives a crap* " an eco-friendly toilet paper brand.

**The BBC** will show **Champions League** highlights for the next three years from 22.00pm on Wednesday. Of Champions League match weeks there will be match-by-match highlights on BBC i-Player and the BBC website and app, plus highlights shown on BBC 1 at 22.40 pm. TNT Sports and Amazon Prime video will continue to show the games live in the UK.

**Witchford 96 FC** of the Cambridgeshire League have been given a helping hand from Witchford Parish Council who have donated £10k to Witchford Sports & Social Club to erect fencing on the village playing fields to prevent people from using the land for unauthorised encampments, after gypsies broke the gates to set up camp.



NECL Division 1 side **Wakefield AFC** have announced a return to Featherstone Rovers Rugby League ground. The decision was driven by increased costs to meet ground safety certificate requirements and the planned long-term maintenance following the rugby season. Gus Decca the chairman of Wakefield AFC said for the club's long-term viability, it is essential to develop our own facilities.

Please note the FA Vase game on Saturday 24th August - Wakefield AFC v 1874 Northwich will be played at Wakefield Trinity's ground due to the unavailability of Featherstone Rovers' ground.

Matchroom Sports (Barry Hearn) are to sponsor **Brentwood Town** of the Isthmian Division 1 North for two more years. The club have have extended their bar area and unveiled a new 3g pitch which will be used by the local community.

For those interested in Women's football, please note that Reading WFC will train and play their home games at Slough Town FC. The club have dropped to the fifth tier of women's football after they withdrew from the Championship.

**19/08/24: Gary Spooner** writes - *'Yesterday I ended up down the road at Leicester St Andrews 2 Gornal Athletic 4. It was certainly a game of two halves as Gornal were 4 up at half time...'*

**18/08/24: John Walker (St Neots Town FC)** writes: The weekly Non-League Football Paper has selected yesterday's home FA Cup match with Edgware & Kingsbury to be featured in this week's edition.

**16/08/24: WebEd - PLEASE NOTE THE LATEST FGIF WEBSITE UPDATES:**

- (1) All outstanding **photos** from the end of last season have now been uploaded to the *FGIF* Flickr Photo Album gallery,
- (2) All outstanding **TT reports** from the end of last season have been added to the *FGIF* TT Reports & Reviews Archive and can be found [HERE](#),
- (3) All the **photo albums** from last season have now been arranged alphabetically and added to the 2023-24 *FGIF* Photo Album Index and
- (4) The **Complete FGIF A2Z Photo Album Index** covering all the clubs/grounds from season 2012-13 up to and including the end of last season has now been fully revised and updated. This contains albums from over 2000 clubs. Click [HERE](#) for more.

Many thanks to ALL contributors for your continued help and support..

**11/08/24: Bob Powell** - the NCEL Division 1 game on Saturday 17th August between **Maltby Main** and Selby Town will be switched and played at Selby Town (ko 3.00pm) due to pitch renovation work. This should be ready in time by the end of August.

**Accrington Stanley** are the first club to get a £100k grant from the Skybet EFL Building Foundation fund. The money will go towards a 3g pitch for community and training purposes.

Strange goings on in the Wearside League - **Durham City** were due play Newton Aycliffe YFC Senior at Leyburn Grove Houghton (on Wed 07/08). The visitors say they are not turning up with no reason given. **Durham FC Corinthians** will be playing at Consett FC this season and **Belmont United** will be playing at Durham City's old ground at New Ferens Park this season.

Last night's FA Cup Extra Preliminary round replay at **Walsall Wood** (v Worcester City) was abandoned early in the second half due to floodlight failure. So far everybody is remaining tight lipped about what will happen as the next round of the competition is due to be played on Saturday 17th August. It's been a bad start to the season for Walsall Wood with drainage problems and having power supply problems cash only admissions were in use away from the turnstiles last night.

Latest News - The FA have made a decision due to the problems to replay the game on Tuesday 13th August at Worcester City's ground (ko 7.45 pm) which means that both clubs scheduled midweek league fixtures are now postponed.

The **FA of Wales** will invest £3m in North Wales facilities as it prepares to host the 2026 UEFA Men's under 19 Championships. The aim is to improve four match venues and seven training facilities which include venues at: Nantporth Stadium (**Bangor City FC**); Central Park (**Denbigh Town FC**); The Oval (**Caernarfon Town FC**) and Stoke Cae Ras Racecourse ground (**Wrexham AFC**) and training facilities at: Llanelian Road (**Colwyn Bay FC**); Colliers Park Gresford (**Wrexham AFC** training ground); The Globe (**Buckley Town FC**); Memorial playing fields (**Ruthin Town FC**); Belle Vue Rhyl home of **CPDY Rhyl** who play in the North West Coast League (third tier of Welsh football) replacing the old Rhyl team who folded two years ago; The New Oval (**Holyhead Hotspur FC**) and Cae Sling (**Penmaenmawr Phoenix FC** who also play in the North West Coast League).

**Caversham United** and **FC Bracknell** who are now running Saturday sides are joining the East Berks League for season 24/25. Another new club is **Bracknell Aces** all three clubs will be playing in Division 1 which starts on Saturday August 17th, with the Premier Division starting on Saturday 31st August.

**Bury FC** of the NWCL Premier Division played their first home game of the season at their Gigg Lane ground (result was Bury 2 v Irlam 2). Their new state of the art 3g pitch was in operation and manager Dave McNabb described the pitch as brilliant and said it can be in use seven days a week.

Plans for a new London overground station next to **Millwall FC** stadium have been renewed after a developer building homes in the area has pledged £17m for the project. It will be called the Surrey Canal railway station.

**Harborough Town** who were promoted to the Southern League Premier Division Central have submitted plans to Harborough District Council to increase the capacity of its ground including a 154-seater stand, installing new turnstiles, building a new directors box (some of these improvements are mandatory requirements by the FA as failure to complete them by March 2025 could mean automatic relegation)

**11/08/24: Silvia Tuson** - writes: Just to let you know that entry to Peterborough Sports FC is now card only. Apparently, there's been some money going missing and to make sure that this can't happen again they are now card only starting at the beginning of this season. They are now charging £18 for an adult and £14 for an OAP.

**11/08/24: Peter Francis** (Chairman of the Bedfordshire County League) writes:

The BCFL joins forces with HBC Logistics. The Bedfordshire County Football League is pleased to announce agreement has been reached with HBC Logistics for them to become the leagues mainline sponsor for season 2024-25. Peter said, *"We are delighted to welcome HBC Logistics aboard for the 2024-25 season being our first mainline sponsor in its 120-year history and look forward to the positive impact this partnership will have on our clubs."*

The revenue raised from this sponsorship will be distributed back to our clubs in various forms of rewards at the leagues 2025 Annual General Meeting.

**11/08/24 - Hatfield Town** - the club has resigned from the Herts Senior County League and since folded. It cites the local authority's inability to find them a suitable venue to play at to progress up through the leagues as being the main reason.

**07/08/24: Keith Aslan** writes - *'All being well I will be attending **Avery FC** on Saturday. First season in the West Midlands League. Their first two games have been 0-9 and 1-8 so I'm getting in there quick before the enthusiasm for programmes (and football) disappears. Two weeks ago, I went to **Thornton Cleveleys** and didn't get home until the early hours of Sunday. Waiting on Preston station for a non-existent train with no information. There was a stage when I was worried that I'd get home at all. Turned out the train was only 2 hours late! Avanti eh...'*

**04/08/24: Jon T Green** - writes: *'With the local Sunday Leagues not having started yet and no cricket available today I thought I'd send you the pictures from yesterday's hop to **Stapenhill**. The town itself is really just an overspill from Burton-on-Trent but the walk between the two over a gorgeous old black and white bridge across the river and flood plain is just beautiful'*

**04/08/24: Bob Powell** writes - **Deeping United FC** are playing in the Peterborough & District League Premier Division, have put in a planning application to change the use of 10.62 acres of farmland into a new football ground, with South Kesteven District Council. The club has 450 playing members and share facilities with the Deeping School.

Southern League **Leiston** have got much improved new floodlights and dugouts thanks to a grant from the Football Foundation.

**Rochester United** of the Southern Counties East League Division 1 who lost in last season's play-offs are planning to build a new clubhouse with more ground improvements to follow. The club hope to climb the non-league pyramid in time.

**Epsom & Ewell FC** have left Cobham FC and will this season be ground sharing with Corinthian Casuals at Kings George's Field in Tolworth.

Gravesham Borough Council has given the green light for Northfleet Harbourside Development to go-ahead. This means that **Ebbsfleet United** will have a new £40m 8000-seater multi use community stadium and event facilities. The development will mean up to 3500 new homes will be built including a 800-room hotel.

**Cefn Druids** will return to Welsh football for season 24/25 at tier 5. Druids withdrew from the 2nd tier Cymru North for the 2023/24 season. The Wrexham based side played in the Europa league qualifiers in 2012 and 2018.

It's a sad state of our times that the **South Shields FC** clubhouse was broken into with bottles of spirits, items from a vending machine, sweets and money from a children's charity tins being stolen!

Midland League Division 1 side **Coventry Copsewood** have put in a planning application for new floodlights. Chairman Craig Watson said the lights are 30 years old and need replacing. The new led floodlights are more energy efficient.

FA Cup replays are scrapped from the 1st round proper, but apply during the qualifying rounds so there are may be many changes to this week's mid-week fixtures.

## JULY 2024

**28/07/24: Bob Powell** writes - the **Midland League Premier Division** will be an 18-team division this season, down from 20 teams previously.

**Romulus FC** have left the CV Stadium and will be ground sharing with Sutton Coldfield Town (Coles Lane) this season. One interesting fixture - FA Cup Extra Preliminary Round on Sat 3rd August (ko 3.00 pm) Sutton Coldfield Town v FC Romulus.

Southern League **Royston Town** has unveiled a new home shirt featuring a design inspired by cave carvings linked to the Knights Templar, found by accident in 1792 in Royston Cave. The site said it was a wonderful way to celebrate its unique heritage.

Champions League 2nd Qualifying round - Ferencvaros 5 v **TNS** 0 - barring a miracle comeback in next week's home leg (Tuesday 30th July) Saints will drop into the Europa League 3rd Qualifying round where they will face either Cypriot side Apoel or Moldova's FC Petrocub (1st leg Apoel lead 1-0).

**Ilkeston** Rutland Sports Park is to have a new £450k 3g pitch with new led floodlights, fencing and divider nets. Work begins on 29th July and should be completed by early October. The sports park is home to various sports indoor and outdoor and with the improved facilities some clubs may be interested in playing there if we get a repeat of last season's wet weather.

**Blackpool FC** plan to build an elite training ground and academy. The council are backing the plan and the scheme will include 10 outdoor pitches, an indoor pitch, a two storey training building for use by Blackpool's first and academy teams.

The FA Cup Extra Preliminary Round - five games will be played on Friday 2nd August. They are as follows:

**Great Yarmouth** v Kirkley (ko 7.45 pm); **Spelthorne Sports** v Burgess Hill (ko 7.45 pm); **Heaton Stannington** v Easington Colliery (ko 7.45 pm, admission adults £9.00 and concessions £6.00); **AFC Liverpool** v Abbey Hey (ko 8.00 pm) and **Albion Sports** v Trafford (ko 8.00 pm).

FA Cup Extra Preliminary round on Saturday 3rd August: anybody intending to watch **Binfield** v Wokingham Town (formerly Wokingham & Embrook) please note the match will ko at 12.30 pm. This venue is a cashless venue with admission for adults £10.00, concessions £6.00 and u16's £1.00.

There are four new teams in the **Northern League** this season:

**Kendal Town** who were moved from the NWCL; **Marske United** who resigned from the Northern Premier League; **Darlington Town** (address Eastbourne Community Stadium 19 Bourne Avenue Darlington DL1 1LJ); note this is a multi-sports venue with an 8 lane running track and 3g pitch and **Grangetown Boys Club** (address B & W Lifting Stadium, Grange Farm Road Middlesbrough TS6 7HP).

Note that here are five FA Cup ties on Sunday 4th August in the Extra Preliminary round:

**Berks County** v Clevedon ko 13.00 pm (they groundshare with Ascot United) tickets adults £7.50, concessions £5.00 and u16's £2.00; **Cambridge City** v Lakenheath at Histon FC (ko 14.00 pm). Cambridge should have moved into their new stadium at Sawston by now and are being delayed because they have no electrical connections

to the national grid due to legal delays); **Hallam** v Lower Breck ko 14.00pm; **Beverley Town** v Whitley Bay (ko 15.00pm) and **Littlehampton** v Tooting & Mitcham (ko 15.00pm).

**The National League** has announced a seven-year deal with Dazn, Europe's largest sports broadcaster. They haven't said what the deal is worth. It could be a lifeline to several clubs with matches being shown in up to 200 countries.

**Bedford Town** - as work on Bedford Town's 3G pitch yet to be completed, **Hitchin Town** have sent me the following information:

*'Just to clarify: We have an agreement in place for Bedford Town to play two of their pre-season friendlies at Top Field. Beyond that, there has as yet been no formal approach from, or agreement with Bedford Town regarding a formal ground share once the season proper begins. Of course, any such ground share would require ratification by the Southern League'*

**21/07/24: WedEd** writes - **IMPORTANT NOTICE - SITE UPDATE JULY 2024** - as keen readers and visitors to the site you may have been aware that there has been a lack of regular updates to FGIF since the beginning of April. Having felt unwell shortly after the Easter break, I was admitted into hospital for tests and subsequently placed on a two-week waiting list for surgery. Despite two cancellations and a further three months wait for treatment, I am pleased to say I that I underwent a successful operation last week and am now back at home enjoying some much-needed rest and relaxation.

*Although I have been told by my consultant to take things easy for the next four to six weeks (with an enforced ban on any heavy lifting, driving, playing sport and groundhopping), I am thankfully able to resume some normal web editing duties once again (in between doing the easier chores and watching the Olympics on TV, of course). As a result, I would encourage all those of you who are no doubt chomping at the bit in readiness for the forthcoming football season to send in your latest photos, reports, programme and ground news so we can publicise your travels in the normal way. Yes, I am delighted to say that FGIF is back up and running once again as the 2024-25 campaign fast approaches.*

*You may have also noticed that I have already started adding the outstanding photos carried over from the end of last season into the album gallery. Once I've completed this, the remaining reports from your 'hopping trips will then be uploaded onto the TT pages for 23-24. If you still have any further pictures or ground reviews from last season or maybe some from the start of this one (I know that many of you enjoy watching friendlies), then please send them in and I will upload them to the appropriate pages. Hopefully it won't take too long before normal service is resumed.*



*And finally, I would just like to say a massive thank you to all those of you who contacted me over the last few months either by phone, E-Mail or text with your many get-well messages and words of encouragement. It certainly meant a great deal to me, Fran and the girls to hear from every one of you. I intend to catch up with you all very soon.*

*As always, I hope that you have an enjoyable and successful season whichever roped off pitch or stadium you decide to visit on your travels. I can't thank you enough for your valuable contributions in helping to make FGIF such a wonderful football resource, one that has appealed to so many ground collectors over the last twenty years. Without your support none of this would be at all possible. May the joys of hopping long continue!*

**21/07/24: Bob Powell** writes -There are three new clubs in the **NWCL Div North**. All three are at home on the opening day of the season Saturday 27th July (all 3.00pm ko's)

**Maghull** v Darwen FC at Old Hall Lane (L31 3DY). This ground is 1 mile from their old ground at Deyes Lane and they join the league from the West Cheshire League where they played 25 years ago),

**Thornton Cleveleys** v Nelson at Gamble Road and

**Skelmersdale United** v Atherton LR (they ground share with Burscough FC at the Burscough Community Stadium (Bobby Langton Way Burscough/Ormskirk. This ground replaces Burscough's Old Victoria Park ground which was demolished in 2020).

The **NCEL** has four new teams in Division 1 for season 24/25. The clubs are as follows:

**Appleby Frodingham** promoted from the Lincolnshire League - address Brumby Hall, Scunthorpe,

**Club Thorne Colliery** promoted from the Humber Premier League - address Welfare Ground Moorends in Doncaster,

**Deane & District** promoted from the Central Midlands Alliance League Premier Division North - address Welfare Community Ground Furlong Road Goldthorpe (Rotherham) S63 9EH and

**South Leeds FC** (previously known as Middleton) promoted from the Yorkshire Amateur League Supreme Division - address South Leeds Stadium Belle Isle Leeds S11 5DJ. It is also the home of Hunslet RL Club.

Note that two of the four clubs are at home on Sat 27th July 2024:

Club Thorne Colliery v Wakefield AFC (ko 3.00 pm) and Deane & District v Swallownest (ko 3.00 pm).

Isthmian League Division 1 North side **Redbridge** have installed a 3g pitch and the club's ground will be known as the techsoc.com stadium in future.

National League **Woking** are facing a financial crisis. Owner Drew Volpe said that only a loan from his parents has kept the club afloat in recent weeks, adding that the club will go into administration unless a new buyer can be found.

The **Northern Premier League** fixtures were released late on Thursday 18/07 and the season starts on Saturday August 10<sup>th</sup> 2024.

**Bristol Rovers FC** are consulting residents about plans to build student flats next to the Memorial Stadium. 350 students to be accommodated in a six-storey building adjacent to the stadium. The east and north stands would then be upgraded increasing the stadium's capacity from 12,534 to 17,000.

**The Southern League** are to launch a Saturday evening e-newspaper. It will be free to download every Saturday evening at 6.45pm throughout the season starting on Saturday August 10<sup>th</sup>. It will have all the scores and match reports etc.

**Potters Bar Town** - the club have announced a temporary groundshare with Kings Langley while the Isthmian League side are having an artificial surface laid at their home.

**Bedford Town and Biggleswade** - while both clubs are waiting for work on Bedford Town's 3G pitch to be completed they have arranged for temporary groundshares, should the need arise, with Bedford Town playing at Hitchin Town and Biggleswade at Barton Rovers.

-End-